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**We are back
.... and we
are here to
stay**

IT WAS AN exciting time in our Corrimal offices on New South Wales's beautiful south coast towards the end of last week as it became obvious that the months of frustration were finally over.

With telecommunications lines finally installed, a brand new state-of-the-art computer system up and running (and the bugs ironed out) - and a major print and distribution deal finally sealed it was let the presses roll.

The result, Australia's best selling soccer newspaper is back and this time we are weekly and 52 weeks a year. And we are to stay.

So if you want to read the big stories about the big names in Aussie soccer, then read on

**GORDON
HUNTER:
Why I Turned
My Back
On Oz**



BLANCO LEADS SOCCEROOS



AUSTRALIAN soccer coach Raul Blanco led the USA bound Socceroos out of Sydney airport on Monday morning with fans hoping that the Stateside jaunt will salvage some battered pride after the recent humiliating loss to New Zealand.

Blanco's squad is experimental, with the match against the United States on Friday a gamble drawing on some of Australia's brightest young talent for the game in San Jose.

Thirteen players from the Olympic squad are included but the Socceroo boss has brought in some big guns in every key position.

Croatia Zagreb hot-shot Mark Viduka, still waiting for a transfer to Glasgow Celtic, will lead the attack and be partnered by experienced Adelaide City striker Damian Mori.

City defender Alex Tobin has been named skipper and will marshal the defence while classy Hadjuk

Split midfielder Josip Skoko has also been listed in the 19-man squad.

Blanco said while 13 of the Socceroo squad was drawn from the Under-23 Olympic squad, which he also coaches, the six "overage" players brought a balance to it, including late addition, Tony Popovic.

"We're giving a lot of young players a chance to prove themselves; it's a brave move but sometimes you have to be prepared to take a chance," Blanco said. "You can't always play it safe but I believe there is a lot of quality in this young brigade."

Friday's game against the United States game was originally planned as a warm-up to the lucrative Confederations Cup in Mexico in January.

But Australia's shock loss to New Zealand in the Oceania qualifiers meant the Kiwis went instead of the Socceroos and placed a question mark over the significance of the game against the Americans.



Sanfrecce Hiroshima's Tony Popovic: a late Socceroo call-up

With many European-based players unavailable, Blanco has gambled on match-hardening the Olyroos in the lead up to 2000. He also has included

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**THE WEEKLY BIBLE OF AUSTRALIAN SOCCER
IN YOUR NEWSAGENCY - EVERY TUESDAY**

Hooligans won't damage World Cup hopes

By Mike Collett
IN LONDON

FIFA PRESIDENT Sepp Blatter has said that he expected England to present a strong, professional bid to host the 2006 World Cup finals — although Africa was still the logical choice to stage the tournament.

However, Blatter emphasised that any successful nation would have to meet all the conditions laid down by FIFA for hosting the tournament — listing stadium facilities, transportation, telecommunications, security and hotels — and only then could an African nation be considered.

Blatter, 62, making his second visit to England in a month, said at a news conference after meeting British prime minister Tony Blair at Downing Street:

"Nothing has changed since I first became FIFA president in June.

"I think that after the United States in 1994, France in 1998 and Asia in 2002, the logical choice for the 2006 World Cup should be Africa.

"But I know we will get a very strong, professional bid from England, and it is not just me that makes the decision but the 24 members of the FIFA Executive."

Blatter also said that the "hooligan elements" that attach themselves to the English team would not damage England's hopes.

This was a view welcomed by British Sports Minister Tony Banks, who said that the Prime Minister had reassured Mr Blatter legislation would soon be in place closing loopholes that allow known hooligans to follow England to matches around Europe.

England's campaign to stage the World Cup for the first time since 1966 gained a boost earlier this month when FIFA brought forward the deadline for bids to be submitted from September 1999 to July 1999 — which could put extra pressure on some of the other contenders.

Blatter confirmed that he expected bids from England, Germany,

South Africa, Nigeria, Morocco, Egypt and Brazil.

Alec McGivan, the director of the English campaign said: "If you take South Africa as our strongest opponents, there are a lot of conditions to be met and the big question is, will South Africa meet those conditions in time?"

"The final bids must go in by next July and I imagine South Africa has got a lot of work to

do to meet those conditions.

That is an issue and a problem for them.

"We were at pains today to make it clear to the president of FIFA that we are ready.

"We talked about the building of the new Wembley but that is the last piece of our jigsaw and everything else is in place for us to stage a great World Cup and I think the FIFA president has recognised the strength of our position.

"I have no doubt at all that we are the strongest candidate in what we can offer FIFA.

"Mr Blatter said to the Prime Minister that what matters is that FIFA has the best possible facilities for the World Cup and I really don't think that we have anything to fear from the opposition on that score."

FIFA inspection

teams will visit the contenders next year and a final decision will be made in March 2000.

FOOTNOTE: The next logical time that another Asian/Oceania bid would be considered would be after the 2010 World Cup, expected to be held in South America, or even 2014 — with the Africans guaranteed a spot before a likely Australian bid.

FORMER HIBERNIAN CAPTAIN GORDON

The Scots star who turned his back on Oz

By Bruce Campbell

HE WAS the player flown out from Scotland to rescue a disastrous start by the troubled Canberra Cosmos.

But after helping to turn last season's record run of losses into a record run of non-defeats, Gordon Hunter was shown the door.

And speaking from his home near Edinburgh the former Scottish Under 21 international has slammed the NSL club, claiming lack of professionalism.

"I came back to Australia after a holiday expecting the Cosmos to re-sign me," says Hunter.

"I really enjoyed my time in Canberra and would have gladly signed on for another season.

"But when I got back it seems that everything had changed."

Left to scramble

for another club with just weeks to go before the start of the new British season, Hunter flew back to Scotland where he went on extended trial with

of \$5,000, the amount due to him for his final contractual month with the Canberra Cosmos.

But when *Inside Soccer* contacted the Cosmos we were told

withholding the money until a matter concerning non-payment of charges related to damages at his Canberra apartment was cleared up.

"I've still got a lot to offer and would really like to come back to Australia but just now I want to extend my career in the Scottish Premier League as long as I can."

Livingstone Thistle and Airdrie.

But worse was to come when the star defender tried to secure an international clearance.

"I couldn't get a game at Airdrie because I didn't have a clearance," he said.

"I contacted the Australian Soccer Federation and they were very sympathetic to my case.

"They promised some action — particularly over the amount of money that was owed to me at the end of my contract period."

Hunter is believed to be due a sum in excess

that "it had all been cleared up."

"We have given him his clearance," said the then General Manager Dennis Glavinic — who has since been sacked himself.

"I don't know what all the fuss is about, we have given him his clearance."

But Hunter was adamant that the clearance had taken nearly three months to come through and had cost him a place at ambitious Airdrie.

Glavinic refused to make comment on the outstanding sum although he did say that the Cosmos were

The sum, believed to be under \$50, was paid by a former Canberra team-mate of Hunter — although the month's salary remains unpaid.

Both Hunter and his wife Karen slammed stories of the apartment being trashed as a "joke".

When he was told the rumour which was the talk of Canberra he immediately contacted the Canberra Real Estate agency which confirmed the story had no substance.

Neither the ASF nor the Canberra Cosmos would confirm these details.

"I am not allowed to make any comment on that," replied an ASF official when we went calling.

A senior ASF official also failed to return calls.

"It isn't on," said an angry Hunter.

"I worked hard for the club.

"I thought that I had earned their respect but in the end they left me high and dry.

"In the last match of last season Rale Rasic even made me captain for the day.

"Rasic gave a big pre-match speech telling the

IMG to promote Soccer Australia

THE GIANT International Management Group has reached an agreement with Soccer Australia to promote its national teams and licensed products.

A spokesman for IMG said the contracts had yet to be drawn up but both parties had come to a provisional agreement on IMG's proposal.

IMG and the Rivkin Group were front-

runners for the contract with IMG gaining provisional approval at a Soccer Australia board meeting last weekend.

Soccer Australia was yet to confirm the deal but federation chairman Basil Scarsella said last week that it was likely that the company which promised more international fixtures would have the edge.

"We're pleased that

Soccer Australia has asked us to go to the next step," an IMG spokesman said.

"We're more than happy that we have reached an in-principle agreement, we're excited about the prospect," he said.

The agreement does not touch on television rights and existing sponsorship agreements.

COST CUTTING EXERCISE

"I CAN'T BELIEVE that the Cosmos ever let him go," said one Canberra player.

"The difference when Hunter arrived at the club was immense — he was just so professional.

"We all learned a lot from him, he was such a good player."

Hunter stopped the rot at the Canberra club in his first match, a hard away 0-0 draw at Gippsland.

The very next game saw the Cosmos record their first win

of the season against Brisbane Strikers settling the club up for a mini-run of success.

But with the failure to land a proven goal getter Canberra Cosmos were always doomed to a cellar season and long before the final round the rot had set in.

When Branko Culina was ditched with five games to go Rale Rasic was called in and immediately adopted a behind-the-ball style of play.

But the biggest achievement of Hunter during his spell with the Cosmos was the improvement in form of players like Andy Roberts, Toplica Popovich and Ivan Zelic.

It is believed in local circles that the club cut Hunter as a cost-cutting exercise.

HUNTER TELLS OF HIS CANBERRA DEBACLE



Happier times for Hunter; on the shores of Lake Burley Griffin as a Canberra player

other players what an example I was and that they should give the same kind of commitment.

"Now he is saying I am too slow.

"He is just a joke."

Ironically, at one stage Hunter was in line for the caretaker coach's job but told club officials he wasn't interested, instead preferring to concentrate on playing.

"I'm not ready for coaching yet," he added.

"It is something I would like to do later on but I want to keep playing as long as I can."

But with just weeks to go before the start of the new Australian summer

season Hunter was offered a contract with another NSL side and

"I really do like Australia and have made a lot of great

Dundee in the Scottish Premier League.

"After my experience in Canberra I just wanted to play football again.

"I have signed a three month deal with Dundee but who knows?

"I've still got a lot to offer and would really like to come back to Australia.

"But just now I want to extend my career in the Scottish Premier League as long as I can."

Bruce Campbell FOOTNOTE: The Gordon Hunter saga had a happy ending, at least for Dundee fans, when he was called up for first team action last weekend.



looked set to continue his love affair with Australia.

friends in soccer there," he said.

"But I signed on with

That Havelange story

FIFA boss in dreamland says Japan

By Jeremy Walker

JAPAN'S leading football official has expressed surprise that former FIFA president Joao Havelange should say it was a mistake to award the 2002 World Cup jointly to Japan and South Korea.

Shun-ichiro Okano, president of the Japanese Football Association (JFA), said it was Havelange who had put the co-hosting idea to the FIFA executive committee in Zurich on June 1, 1996.

"Mr Havelange proposed it, so co-hosting was decided," said Okano, who was a member of the Japanese delegation

bidding against the Koreans.

"Today, maybe he (Havelange) says no, he was wrong; but, as a matter of fact, he proposed it and the executive board unanimously agreed.

"Those are the facts," Okano said.

Havelange, who was succeeded as FIFA president by his former general secretary, Sepp Blatter, in June, said recently that the co-hosting decision was a mistake, and it had been forced on him by the Europeans.

"It's an error," he told the France Football magazine.

"The decision was put forward by the Europeans to upset me.

"But a president never loses.

"When I understood what they were plotting, I presented the proposition so as not to be put in a difficult position."

Asked why Havelange, who had been pro-Japan in the bidding campaign, should re-open old wounds as the Koreans and Japanese begin working together to stage the next World



Cup, Okano replied: "I think everyone has a dream, and at that time I am sure Dr. Havelange had a dream that the World Cup should go to Asia first, and to one country because he thought it would be easier to organise the World Cup in one country than it would co-hosting.

"Of course he did a wonderful job while he was president, but now he's honorary president and I'm sure he can say whatever he wants to say."

Okano, who succeeded Ken Naganuma as JFA president shortly after the World Cup finals in France, and his Korean counterpart, KFA president Dr.

Chung Mong Joon, have been appointed members of the recently-formed Organising Committee for the FIFA World Cup 2002, under the chairmanship of UEFA's Swedish president Lennart Johansson.

The Japanese official is hoping that the decision-making progress can pick up speed.

"The FIFA organising committee is the supreme power and council; Japan and South Korea cannot make decisions," he said.

"I hope FIFA will call the first meeting of the organising committee as soon as possible, otherwise three and a half years is very short to prepare everything."

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Suites 4-5, 108 Railway Street, CORRIMAL,
NSW 2518, AUSTRALIA
TELEPHONE: 02-4285-7480
FAX: 02-4285-7481
EMAIL: insidesoccer@hotmail.com

EDITOR: Bruce Campbell

LAYOUT: Jo Jo

ADMINISTRATION: Susan Campbell

REGULAR CONTRIBUTORS: Bob Brooks, Alan Clark, Fred Legget, Stuart Bell, Stuart Jones, John White

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COMMENT

DATELINE: LONDON

Bradford City striker Gordon Watson has won his fight for damages after breaking his leg in a tackle in an English first division soccer match.

The High Court in Leeds, northern England, ruled that Kevin Gray had made a reckless tackle and had been negligent.

The court also found against Gray's club Huddersfield Town which was being sued for the loss of Watson's services.

The court will decide early next year on the level of damages to be paid.

The tackle happened in a match played on February 1, 1997.

Watson's double fracture kept him out of the game for 18 months.

He has recently resumed playing but has yet to complete a full 90 minutes in a match.

TV analyst Jimmy Hill, a former player and manager, described the tackle as one of the worst he had ever seen in nearly 50 years in the game.

THAT PIECE of news from Britain, the home of the world game, will surely send shudders around the globe.

Now, and at long last, certain coaches will think twice about sending players onto the field of play with instructions to "sort someone out".

But maybe the truth, and this is equally frightening, is that the legal deterrent may still not be enough to protect players from on-field thuggery.

Despite the hopes of every football fan that the FIFA-led fair play initiative is gathering force, the truth is that there will always be a place in our game for the results-at-all-costs coach.

And that means that there will also be a place for the ultra hard-man player. That is sad, but it is also more of a reality than the clear signal message that the Gordon Watson case should be having.

In the case of the 'fringe' thugs it will undoubtedly have an effect, they will tone down, they will think before putting in that lunging tackle from behind.

But over the last eighteen months I have seen leg-breaking tackles where there was clear intent on the part of the perpetrator. The injury sustained by Ivan Zelic in what was, after all, only a practice match was a particularly nasty one, the sort that makes you nearly physically sick.

Everyone has witnessed the type; a riled up defender making a 20 yard run to lunge in with a tackle that could only ever be high.

The result? A broken leg or crippled ligaments.

That kind of tackle won't be stopped by the Watson case, that won't be stopped by the threat of legal action. It will only be stopped when referees flash an immediate red card and then the ruling body puts the offender out of the game for a season or more. Any less just isn't acceptable.

If referees, coaches and federations don't adopt a tougher stance then THEY will render themselves liable for legal repercussion, not just the offending player. Just because you are involved in sport doesn't absolve you from the laws of the land and if those who are in the position to lay down tougher measures or make protecting rules don't, then they are culpable. That is the message which is coming across with court decisions like this.

Why do you think FIFA has adopted its fair play policy? Certainly there is the moral conscious of a ruling body which abhors violence on the field.

But there is also the tacit admission that FIFA has recognised the link between on-field violence and terrace thuggery. By making a stance they are protecting themselves from almost certain future legal action from injured citizens.

They are also protecting themselves from possible legal action from injured players who now have access to the kind of legal clout that would make any administrator shake. Sport is being seen by a hungry legal corps as an untapped gold mine.

Let's hope that Australian soccer can avoid this kind of story line, although there is a long way to go before we can claim that our own doorstep is clean.

Bruce Campbell



THE GREATEST NSL CLUB STRIKE FORCE OF ALL TIME? That is how many fans see the combination of Frank Farina, Davie Mitchell and John Kosmina in their hey-day at Sydney City. Now the talented trio are at the helm as coaches of Marconi, Sydney United and Brisbane Strikers respectively.

Your WRITE

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You must include a day time telephone number for verification purposes, if necessary, and letters should be kept under 400 words.

All correspondence must include your name and address - although we will print letters under nom-de-plumes.

No home for Cosmos

THE CANBERRA Cosmos will play their next two 'home' games against Perth Glory and Melbourne Knights as away games due to refurbishment work being carried out at Bruce Stadium.

"We must play our home matches at Bruce Stadium - anywhere else is not an option," said coach Rale Rasic.

BLANCO LEADS SOCCEROOS

Continued from front page

the older players to make up the backbone of the side.

"We want to see what the younger players are made of - it's an experimental squad, yes," Blanco said.

"We looked at the local players in qualifiers for the Confederations Cup and we now want to give an opportunity to our younger players."

Blanco said he had not been pressured into the move after the loss to New Zealand.

"Bruce Arena, meanwhile, takes charge of the United States for the first time for the Friday night game and has already stamped his mark on the squad bringing in nine first-

timers. The 47-year-old knows expectations are unreasonably high after the US made the World Cup but never won a game.

The Australian game at the Spartan Stadium in San Jose is the USA's first contest since the World Cup and Arena has fulfilled his promise to immediately start rebuilding.

All 22 players named have been drawn from the Major League Soccer competition in the United States, only five were members of the World Cup squad: forwards Brian McBride of Columbus and Joe-Max Moore of New England, midfielder Cobi Jones of Los Angeles, and defenders Jeff Agoos and Eddie Pope

of Arena's club DC United.

"We have a lot of great young talent in this country and they're going to play a role in our success in the coming years," Arena said.

Arena, who was appointed as coach only last week to replace Steve Sampson following the Americans' debacle at the World Cup, said during his news conference about half of his roster for the Australia match would be players who had never played for their country.

MLS Rookie of the Year Ben Olden from DC United leads the pack, along with Los Angeles midfielder Clint Mathis, Chicago Fire forward Josh Wolff and defenders Mike Petke of the MetroStars, Leo Cullen of Miami

and C J Brown of Chicago.

Also getting their first call are goalkeepers Kevin Hartman of Los Angeles, and David Kramer of San Jose and midfielder Richie Williams of DC.

No members of the "old guard" which created the core of the United States team in the last three World Cups were included on the roster: Eric Wynalda, Tab Ramos, Marcelo Balboa, Alexi Lalas or John Harkes - the team's former captain who was surprisingly dismissed by Sampson a month before France '98.

Also today, the US federation announced it would play Germany in a friendly on February 6 in Jacksonville, Florida. Goalkeepers: Kevin

Hartman (Los Angeles), David Kramer (San Jose Clash), Zach Thornton (Chicago).

Defenders: Jeff Agoos (DC United), C.J. Brown (Chicago), Leo Cullen (Miami), Robin Fraser (Los Angeles), Mike Petke (New York-New Jersey), Eddie Pope (DC United). Midfielders: Mark Chung (Kansas City), Cobi Jones (Los Angeles), Eddie Lewis (San Jose), Clint Mathis (Los Angeles), Ben Olsen (DC United), Steve Ralston (Tampa Bay), Richie Williams (DC United).

Forwards: Paul Bravo (Colorado), Roy Lassiter (DC United), Brian McBride (Columbus), Joe-Max Moore (New England), Ante Razov (Chicago), Josh Wolff (Chicago).

Bossa in the clear at Villa

By a special Correspondent

LAST FRIDAY the English Football Association dropped its charge of misconduct against Soccer and Aston Villa's Australian soccer star Mark Bosnich.

Bosnich was charged after supporters complained to police that he swore at them during Villa's game against Everton on August 15.

After the one-hearing before the FA in London, Bosnich said he was pleased the case had been dropped and said he had been treated fairly by the FA.

FA spokesman Adrian Babbington said the charge had been dropped because it was not proven.

Bosnich, who has maintained his innocence throughout the affair, thanked supporters who had written in

his defence.

"It's really all over now, I'd rather not hit the back pages for things like this, I'd rather it was all about football," he said.

In 1996 Bosnich was fined Stg 1,000 (\$A2,747) for making a Nazi-style salute in a game at Tottenham Hotspur.

Bosnich had already expressed his surprise at being charged by the Football Association.

The Australian international was likely to face a suspension if found guilty, having been warned about his future conduct two years ago for that infamous Nazi-style salute.

He had requested a personal hearing with the FA over the matter but said at the time: "As far as I am concerned I have nothing to answer to."

"I haven't even employed a lawyer. It was



necessary last time because the situation was more serious.

"But I haven't given this a second thought and have just requested a hearing as a courtesy."

Bosnich received letters from Everton fans and added: "It is gratifying to think that so

many people are willing to support me."

"I have had a lot of letters and only two - one from the guy who made the allegation - have been derogatory."

But there is still simmering anger over Bosnich's 1996 Nazi-style salute. Already Rome's

Jewish community called on AS Roma to steer clear of the goalkeeper after speculation that the Aussie could be on his way to Italy.

Roma had been following the Villa keeper as a possible replacement for injured Austrian Michael Konsel.

Confederations disaster

THE WITHDRAWAL of World Cup champion France from January's Confederations Cup is sure proof of the feeling amongst UEFA's super powers - that the FIFA tournament is seen as irrelevant and untimely.

The decision is "irrevocable," said Claude Simonet, president of the French soccer federation.

French league president Noel Le Graet has said the Confederations Cup was "just for fun," noting that Brazil was only sending its "B" team and some club owners notably of Italian teams had said they weren't going to release their players.

That leaves the January 8-20 event in Mexico, billed as FIFA's tournament of continental champions, with Brazil, Mexico, Bolivia, the United States, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and New Zealand.

There are no plans to

cancel the tournament, Mexican officials said.

"It affects us. Hopefully, it will be worked out," Mexican federation president Enrique Borja said.

"It would be a pity not to have the world champion."

Some federations and particularly European leagues regard the event as an unneeded, one that exhausts already burned out players, and comes in the middle of the European season.

France's "Les Bleus" were scheduled to represent Europe in the competition.

FIFA president Joseph "Sepp" Blatter expressed disappointment at the decision but indicated no sanctions would be taken against France.

"It is regrettable that the French FA has made a decision like this only 100 days to go before the kickoff of this event," he said in a

statement.

"For the world champions to withdraw from an official FIFA competition in which the French team had undertaken to take part as the representative of the European confederation, UEFA, is hard for me to understand."

Noting that the French decision appeared "irrevocable," Blatter said UEFA would be responsible for selecting a European team to replace France in the tournament.

January's tournament will be the fourth edition of the championship, first contested in 1992 and always previously held in Saudi Arabia.

French internationals playing in European leagues would have missed domestic matches if they played in Mexico.

And officials from Europe's leading domestic leagues have also



Sepp Blatter: first test of his FIFA supremacy

protested to world governing body FIFA over the Confederations Cup.

The chief executive of the English Premier League, Peter Leaver, wrote to Blatter urging the world body to rethink plans for the eight-nation tournament.

FIFA wants all players to be released by their clubs for the competition.

"The Premier League, the other European

leagues and all our clubs are very supportive of the traditional international tournaments like the European Championships, the World Cup and the African Nations Championships," Leaver said.

"What is objected to here is that this is a cup which has been invented and FIFA has sanctioned it without any consultation."

Aussie kids are just too good

AT A TIME when Australian soccer is crying out for some top imported talent it seems that, in some positions at least, our kids are just too good.

Recently former Glasgow Rangers goalkeeper Ally Maxwell contacted the offices of *Inside Soccer* to sound out the possibilities of a move to Australia.

That followed an earlier approach by another former Premier League Scottish goalkeeper, Andy Rhodes.

But neither attracted any great deal of interest from NSL clubs.

A top rated Scottish central defender is also finding it hard to get fixed up.

"It doesn't have anything to do with the ability of players like this," said one high profile NSL club coach.

"It just comes down to dollars and cents."

"With a visa player, the club is up for a one year contract at a visa minimum wage of \$600."

"That is hard enough for most clubs but some of these fellows are commanding twice as much as that in their own lower leagues - we just can't compete."

"Usually there are other incidentals like air travel, accommodation and cars making it a very expensive exercise - particularly if the player turns out to be a dud."

"I would like to bring in a striker or a creative midfielder, someone who can really add something that bit extra on the park."

"We seem to grow goalkeepers on trees here, so it is easier to place a local kid on match payments of a few hundred bucks, and we can also sell them overseas if they prove to be better standard."

And it is just that which is affecting the overseas leagues.

"We have been hit hard by the Bosman ruling," says Maxwell who has a sideboard of trophies and medals won with Glasgow Rangers.

"British clubs now prefer to import cheap talent."

"It used to be Scandinavia but more and more Australians are getting jobs with British league clubs because often there is practically no transfer fee involved and their wages are considerably lower than Scottish or English players."

The amount of Australian footballers playing League football in Britain has doubled in the last five years and there is no sign of it abating.

Recently West Ham United and Crystal Palace have opened up relationships with Australian clubs while the Australian Institute of Sport has been a breeding ground for British clubs for the last few years.

Action was promised by the Australian Soccer Federation, with talk of a contract system established with AIS graduates, however it is believed that the reluctance of the majority of young players to enter such an indenture has vetoed that scheme.

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NSL STARS ANTE COVIC

BY STUART JONES

MARCONI goalkeeper Ante Covic played for Zagreb Hurstville from the Under 6's until he was around 19 years of age. The only thing was for most of that time he played as a striker!

"It was only around four years ago that I switched to being in goals," he recalled. "I trialed for Sydney Croatia (as they were then) as a striker, but it did not look like I would make it. Dad suggested trying out as a goalkeeper and I got in, playing one and a half seasons there in the U/14s and U/15s.

"I returned to Hurstville and quickly progressed into the ranks of the Premier League side. It was in this side that I was spotted by the Leichhardt Tiger's U/21's assistant coach. I had two full seasons at the Tigers, the first in reserve grade, and the second in the top flight. Tony Pezzano was our coach and of course he was a great help to me."

In fact, it was Pezzano who helped him get his move to Marconi.

"I was playing well and Tony let a few people know about me in the game," says Covic. "In the end there were a few NSL coaches coming to watch me play and I could choose a club. I chose Marconi because I felt it was time to join the big league and they were a great side. At 22 it was a bit of a case of now or never."

At Bossley Park things were looking up as he was the first choice keeper and destined for a long spell between the sticks.

Then came a moment that would sicken any fan...

"I had played well in the first two games, including a 'man of the match' in the first," he says. "I was then injured jumping for the ball in my third game (against Canberra Cosmos). At first I thought I was just winded but it ended up being much worse than that. I had got home but through the night the pain got worse and I ended up in hospital.

"Things could have been a lot worse, but to be told I would be for six weeks was a huge blow.

"I would rather be on the field than watching any day. I came back earlier than the doctor advised and for a while there the injury stayed in the back of my mind."

While many would see the mid-season purchase of Michael Gibson as a threat to Covic's position, he saw it as a blessing in the long run.

"Gibbo helped me enormously," says Covic, "and it was good to have his experience as he let me know where I was going wrong and how to improve those aspects of my game. The coaching staff were also great.

"Zoran Matic always wanted the best out of all of us, including me. All the people have been great for me at the club."

Last season Covic finished well in goals after a slight dip in form mid way through.

One of the reasons was the strong Marconi defence and the acquisition of defender Kim from South Korea. However, Covic aims to make sure that he helps the side go a step further than the finals this season and actually win the premiership.

New coach Frank Farina may want to keep a chain around Covic tying him near the posts - just in case he gets a flashback of his day as a striker.

"I always enjoyed it out on the field, and had good success out there," the custodian admits. "I made a decision to be a goalkeeper and must stick with it but my idols continue to be the likes of Davor Suker (he supports Real Madrid). Outside of football my main interests are in the area of motor sports."

These days he may want to pick up a thing or two about scoring goals from the likes of goalkeepers Chilavert and Campos. As for his future his aims are similar to many of those youngsters in the NSL today.

"I would like to have a couple of seasons in the NSL, consolidating my game, and then go and play overseas, perhaps with a team in Germany or Spain," he says.

"I share a dream to play for Australia with a lot of others in the NSL, I would dearly love to pull on the green and gold.

"When it comes to the end of my career I want to look back and be able to say that I enjoyed the game and was extremely successful at it."

Blanco reacts to criticism



Australia's Worst Fifteen Defeats

year	score	versus
1925	2-8	England Professional XI
1951	1-13	England XI
	0-17	England XI (new world record defeat)
1955	0-8	South Africa
1956	1-15	USSR
1957	2-9	Ferencvaros
	1-9	Heart of Midlothian
	0-9	Heart of Midlothian
1964	2-8	Everton
1965	1-6	North Korea
1976	0-1	Hong Kong*
1977	0-1	Fiji*
1978	0-5	Czechoslovakia
1980	0-1	Hong Kong*
1997	0-6	Brazil (Confederations Cup final)

NOTE: * these defeats were against minnows of world football. Despite the large score-line, all of the other listed defeats were against teams much more powerful than Australia. It could be argued that our elimination from the World Cup and recent defeat in the Oceania Cup final by New Zealand could be included in this list of humiliation.



CARETAKER SOCCEROO boss Raul Blanco has answered the critics who have called for his head following Australia's defeat at the hands of old enemy New Zealand in the recent Oceania Cup.

"I think that they are being realistic," he said in the first major interview he has given since the Brisbane final.

"I have had the Socceroos for six games and lost just once, I have had the Olyroos for 12 games and lost only once - two defeats in eighteen games isn't bad."

There has been growing criticism of the stand-in coach in certain media circles following the defeat which ended the cash-starved ASF's hopes of the million dollar jackpot at the Confederations Cup in January.

But Blanco, who has superb credentials as a coach, doesn't intend to step aside for anybody.

Instead, he has spoken candidly of the difficulties of pleasing everyone.

Under fire for bringing back the overseas players when assisting Terry Venables, the likeable South American is now under fire for not bringing them back.

"No, sometimes you just can't win," he said.

"It isn't always possible to keep everyone happy."

"But there is only one way to test new players and that is by giving them games."

"Sometimes a player doesn't have that extra

bit, but the only way I can tell that is by giving him the chance first - on the park.

"There is no other way."

Blanco is also at the crossroads of another dilemma with the Socceroos - whether to stick by the old guns or whether to try out new players.

"We tried seven new caps in Brisbane," he added.

"Sometimes I get criticised by my colleagues also."

"One coach criticised me before for not selecting players at his old club and now I am criticised for selecting players at his new club."

"It is very hard, but that is one of the great things about this country - you do have the right to say your opinion."

One player considered unlucky by many not to be selected for the last squad was Wollongong Wolves captain, Matt Horsley.

Horsley, a right sided flanker, has been outstanding in recent seasons for the Wolves but has only once been called into a training camp.

"Maybe Matt was unlucky," conceded the Socceroo chief.

"But he is playing in a position which we have well covered."

"We also have Brett Emerton, Robert Trajkovski and Goran Lozanovski who all play so well in the position."

"But he has been playing very well for his club."

TIME TO ADJUST

ADEM PORIC found out the hard way what it is like to be playing in Australia's National Soccer League - getting his marching orders in his first game of the season. After just fifteen minutes the new Sydney Olympic signing was on his way to the shower along with Northern Spirit's Marko Rudan.

Sadly, that flare up in the Round 1 fixture came in front of nearly 19,000 fans - the biggest NSL league attendance of all-time.

But it also came in front of a TV audience and Australia's national coach, Raul Blanco, who was watching the game from the stands.

Poric is likely to be one player who is pencilled in to a future Australian squad but before that happens he will have to settle down a bit.

Already rumours are flying around Sydney soccer circles of an over arrogant attitude from the ex-World Youth Cup star who looked set for big things with Sheffield Wednesday in England.

Fortunately for Poric however, Raul Blanco, takes a far more pragmatic view of soccer.

"I remember Adem well from his time at St George and with the World Youth Cup team in Portugal," said Blanco.

"He is a very talented player but he will have to learn to calm down a bit."

"But it takes time to adjust to a different level of soccer. Players coming from overseas must have time to adjust."

"He always gives 110% commitment although maybe in the past his play has had too much exuberance."

"He has matured since being made club captain and that is showing in his play now."

"Horsley could well be selected in future"

and we must look at the preparation of both teams.

"But the Socceroos are very important to Australia."

"It is our national team and people look forward to them playing."

The likelihood,

"I have been involved in this game for a long time and I know what to expect. That doesn't mean that I like criticism, but I accept it as a part of the job."

camps, I have to look at other players."

The next poser for the national team boss is just who to take to America next month.

The Socceroos have been invited but clearly Blanco sees a good opportunity to test the Olyroos as his campaign for the 2000 Olympics gets set to shift up a gear.

That would appear a logical step and also one which would pose less of a disruption to the NSL, so often kicked into the background as Australia has gone in search of international recognition.

"That is a possibility," he says, "I am also the coach of the Olyroos

however, is that the Olyroos will get the nod.

Blanco also opened up at the level of criticism he has received in the last month.

"No, I don't like to be criticised," he said, "but as I have already said that is one of the great things about this country."

"There are some people who you cannot keep happy, but that is soccer."

"I have been involved in this game for a long time and I know what to expect."

"That doesn't mean that I like criticism, but I accept it as apart of the job."

Australia's squad for the US trip:
Alex Tobin (Adelaide City): Captain
Tansel Baser (South Melbourne)
Raphael Bove (SC Heerenveen)
Marco Bresciano (Carlton)
Simon Colosimo (Carlton)
Jason Culina (Sydney Olympic)
Michael Curcija (South Melbourne)
Brett Emerton (Sydney Olympic)
Hayden Foxe (Hiroshima Sanfrecce)
Danny Milosevic (Perth Glory)
Damian Mori (Adelaide City)
Lucas Neill (Millwall Town)
Jason Petkovic (Adelaide City)
Tony Popovic (Hiroshima Sanfrecce)
Sebastian Sinozic (Wollongong Wolves)
Josip Skoko (Hajduk Split)
Mark Viduka (Croatia Zagreb)
Kasey Wehrman (Brisbane Strikers)
Ivan Zelic (Canberra Cosmos)

SYDNEY INDOOR SOCCER RESULTS

GOLD CUP Round 3

Sydney City 4 Niha Tigers 2, Kellyville 4 Easts 1, Parkleigh 5 North Ryde 3, Rooty Hill 8 Central Coast 2

SILVER SHIELD

Fairfield 6 North Ryde 3, Campbelltown 13 Central Coast 2, Easts 6 Putney 4, Sydney City 6 City Eagles 5

SYDNEY CUP Round 7

Kappa 7 Fairfield 4, LH United 5 Ajax 3, Puma 5 Umbra 5, United 5 Ryde-Eastwood 2, Headhunters 8 Wild Turkeys 5, University 3 Turkish Devils 3, Gunners 10 News Limited 3, Munsen 6 Aussie Post 0.

For a decade he has been one of the league's big names, now there are

NEW CHALLENGES FOR MARCONI VETERAN

By Derek Royal and Bruce Campbell

F R A N C I S AWARITEFE has been around the block a few times; spells at Melbourne Knights and South Melbourne preceding his arrival at Marconi some years ago.

But time seems to have affected him little - he still possess a voracious appetite for the game and with the rival of yet another new season in his adopted home he is still looking for challenges.

One of those challenges is maintaining a regular first team berth as Marconi go in search of the honours that their hard to please fans crave.

"Competition for a place in the side is good for the players and I'm sure that the others would agree because it keeps you on your toes," explains the ebony-skinned Londoner who has been a drawcard on the local scene for the last ten years.

"All the other clubs I've played at have had at least three strikers and when I was at the Melbourne Knights, we had about four or five."

"Having competition also brings out the best in me, so I really don't see it as a problem."

Awaritefe found that out the hard way a couple of seasons ago when Marconi brought in livewire forward Sean Babic from neighbours Sydney United.

Manfred Schaefer, then Marconi coach, preferred Babic to Awaritefe in the opening two rounds of the Ericsson Cup that season and although the likeable striker accepted his coach's decision, he was surprised by his omission.

"I'd been playing well



in that pre-season, scoring five goals in four games, so I was both surprised and disappointed at being on the bench then," he recalled.

"I guess it was a matter of taking it on the chin and proving the coach wrong when given the opportunity."

True to his word, the dread-locked magician's form improved enough to see back in the starting line-up.

And his wizardry on the ball still causes mayhem for opposition defences, especially with his height and speed.

In his time at the Bossley Park club Awaritefe has remained a crowd favourite.

"It's a good feeling to get the support of the crowd because it makes

me feel appreciated and that's encouraging," he says.

Awaritefe's continued love of the game at an age when many players of like-vintage start thinking about hanging up their boots is encouraging for the fans.

"I think that if I can avoid injuries and score goals then I can probably play for as long as I want," he says matter-of-factly.

"At the end of the day, if you enjoy the game like I do and you can keep fit and maintain your enthusiasm, then you can certainly keep playing for as long as you like."

"I'd love to play in a Grand Final for Marconi."

Awaritefe's closest tilt at a Grand Final spot

for the Stallions was against Melbourne Knights three seasons ago when a virus laid him low on the eve of the match.

That set the rumour mill going that there was something else afoot, possibly a rift with the club but both Awaritefe and Marconi have always vehemently denied that.

And going into a season in which most of his colleagues very definitely class him in the veteran category, the likeable Englishman looks as sharp as ever.

"I still set myself goals for each season," he says.

"We have a new coach at the club in Frank Farina so there are new challenges."

CLUB PATROL

NEWCASTLE Breakers striker Andrew Borghetto who broke his leg in the first match of the season against Sydney United is expected to be out of plaster before Christmas. That is earlier than his club expected.

CHRIS BALL, a goalkeeper from the West Australian state league, is the latest target for Gippsland Falcons.

TONY FRANKEN'S wife Megan has recently given birth to a daughter, Issabelle.

SYDNEY United stars Abbas Saad and Nathan Day will be out of action until January. Both players received injuries playing in Wollongong, Day breaking his leg in a trial match against the Wolves and Saad having to undergo a knee reconstruction after a leg injury sustained playing as a guest in the ISA Premier League.

CANBERRA Cosmos's talented young defender Lindsay Wilson is expected back for first team duty next week after being out for four weeks with a dislocated shoulder.

AND Gippsland's Levent Osman is expected back to first team duty also after being out with an ankle injury.

CARLTON'S glossy magazine is now on sale at club outlets.

IAN CROOK is out for another three or four weeks. Northern Spirit's high profile English import is out with a knee injury while injury plagued team-mate Gabriel Mendez has the same problem area - although Chi Chi isn't expected to return to first team action much before Christmas.

AND another player on the 'sick list' is Brisbane Striker Royce Brownlie who will be out for a few weeks after suffering a severe asthma attack.

ROBBIE 'Happy' HOOKER is reported to be looking for a new club - in America's MLS.

IT'S NICE TO BE BACK: FARINA

THE WORST KEPT secret in the Ericsson Cup was officially revealed in early June when it was announced that Frank Farina was returning to Bossley Park to take over the coaching role from the recently departed Zoran Matic.

The former Oceania Footballer of the Year, who had starred at the club as a player before going to play in Europe, returned to take charge of the club where he was top scorer in 1987 and 1988.

He also had the honour to score Marconi's 500th goal in National League football.

Farina left Marconi to join Club Bruges in the tough Belgian league and was an immediate success, being voted Best Foreign Player and topping the goal-scoring charts in season 1989-90.

It was inevitable that Frank would become a target for top Italian scouts and it was no surprise when he eventually signed for Bari, in the prestigious Serie A competition.

After Italy, the

globetrotting Socceroo's next port of call was France where he played firstly with Strasbourg and then Lille, before returning to Australia in 1995 to sign up with the Brisbane Strikers.

The next season the Socceroo legend was appointed player/coach of the Strikers, and led the Queensland side to a Grand Final victory over Sydney United in front of a record crowd at Suncorp Stadium.

The life of a professional footballer may seem a glamorous one on the outside but as Farina reveals it also has its complications when it comes to a normal family life.

Said Frank; "For the last ten or twelve years we've been on the move, but I guess that is just the life of a footballer really."

"It's very rare that you stay in one place for any longer than three or four years."

"Sometimes it can work out quite well - for example if a player is based in Sydney it is possible to play for a few clubs and remain here, but in my case

that didn't apply.

"It's difficult being on the move all the time with young kids involved, but coming to Marconi had a very familiar feel about it."

"A lot of the faces that were here ten years ago when I left are still here."

"It was nice to be welcomed back in the way I was."

"I have very happy memories of my time here, especially the last game I played for Marconi when we beat Sydney Croatia to win the championship."

Farina is on record as saying that one of his ambitions is to coach the Socceroos at some time in the future and this still remains one of his long term aims.

Explained the Marconi boss; "It's always been a long term ambition of mine to one day coach the Socceroos, and that hasn't changed."

"Just like when you start out as a player you have dreams and goals and aspirations, and that is the same as when you are coaching."

Fred Legget

Aussie called up for Yugoslavia

Australian born goalkeeper Sasa Ilic, who plays for Charlton Athletic in the English Premier League, has been called up by Yugoslavia to play in this month's international against Ireland.

Following on Ante Seric's earlier decision to play for the land of his heritage, Croatia this is the second high profile Aussie to turn his back on his country this year.

Ilic has been the first team choice at Charlton since displacing fellow Australian Andy Petterson earlier this year.

Born and raised in Melbourne but with Yugoslav parents, Ilic's defection is likely a result of the overabundance of top class keepers vying for a Socceroo shirt.

All Seater Marconi

BOSSLEY PARK has become the first all-seater NSL stadium following its recent upgrading.

Hot on the heels of the Marconi ground improvements will be Hindmarsh Stadium and Bruce Stadium, both on target for major upgrading for the 2000 Olympics.

The work at Marconi has reduced the capacity of the ground which will be about 8,000 when another section is added to the eastern side of the ground.

"The new stand has been imported from overseas and is then assembled on site," said a Marconi club official.

"When all the work is complete it will hold just over eight thousand and if we can fill that every week then we will be delighted."

Last season the Stallions led the way in Sydney crowd figures although new guys Northern Spirit have already shown that they want to take that title.

Marconi are looking for an average in excess of 6,000 per match this season.

Feel The Power

PHOTOS: CANBERRA COSMOS captain Ivan Zelic takes time out for a cappuccino with Canberra Raiders coach, Mal Meninga.

However, 'Zella' isn't thinking of swapping codes - he was part of the ACT Government's promotional campaign, *Feel the Power*.

Zelic has been appointed club captain this season as the NSL club searches for that local identity which they hope will pull back the crowds.

And Zelic added some spice to his coffee with his addition to the Socceroo squad for this week's game against the States - the first Cos-

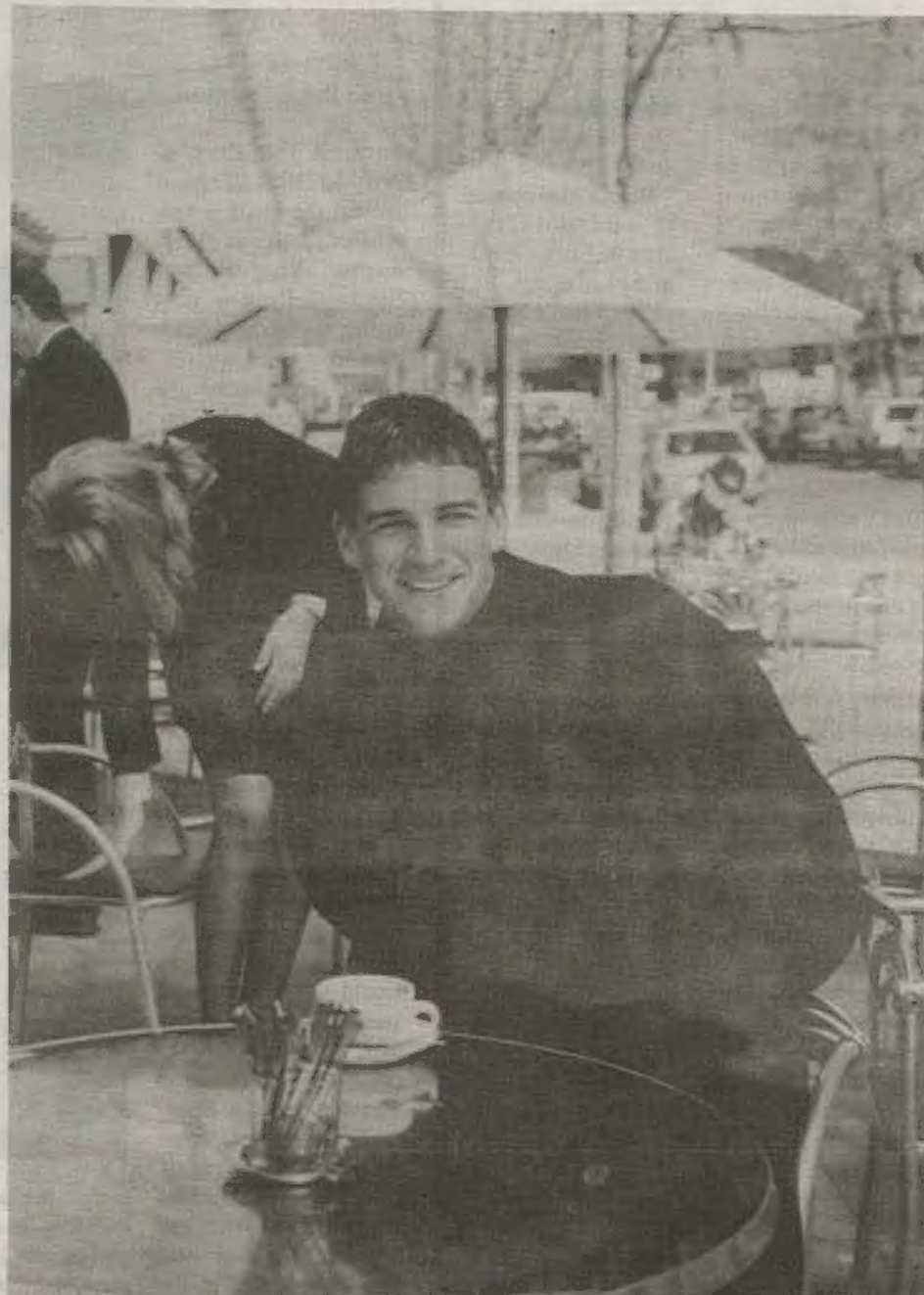
mos representative in the national team since Paul Wade.

Meanwhile, former club captain Norman Kelly is on the brink of Australian citizenship after having completed three years residency since his arrival from Malaysia.

FOOTNOTE:

Despite claims emanating from Canberra in the last few weeks, Ivan Zelic is NOT the youngest ever NSL club captain.

That honour goes to TONY POPOVIC who was only nineteen when Manfred Schaefer made him skipper a Sydney United.



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Marconi stage amazing fightback

By Anthony Raineri
of AAP

IN A controversial Round 4 NSL match, Marconi Fairfield came back from two goals behind to defeat champions South Melbourne 5-3 at Marconi Stadium on Saturday.

Marconi was down and out 2-0 at half time before referee Wayne Dade overruled assistant referee Michael Collins in two of the home teams second half goals.

The decision sparked heated scenes among South Melbourne players and officials resulting in two red cards for the Victorians as well as coach Angie Postecoglou having to be physi-

Dade sends two off as Bossley Park erupts

cally restrained by the fourth official Con Diomis from running on to the field.

Marconi striker Francis Awaritefe began the comeback at 51 minutes

by half-volleying into the net after controlling the ball with his shoulder and chest.

In the 55th minute Collins flagged a Marconi corner for offside

but Marconi defender Dominic Longo played on and tapped the ball into the goal.

Dade consulted Collins on the sideline and decided to overrule

him and award the goal.

Two minutes later South Melbourne goalkeeper Michael Petkovic held the ball in the air next to his goal line.

MARCONI FAIRFIELD 5
SOUTH MELBOURNE 3

Venue: Marconi Stadium

Referee: W Dade

Attendance:

Scorers:

MARC: Awaritefe 51, 57, Longo 55, Kim 68, Maloney 75

SMEL: Baser 34, 82, Lozanovski 25

Man of the Match:

Francis Awaritefe MARC

Marconis Francis Awaritefe rushed in and nodded the ball from Petkovic's hands into the goal for a 3-2 lead.

Collins had flagged for a foul but again Dade awarded the goal after consultation.

Incensed South Melbourne players swamped Dade, resulting in Steve Panopoulos receiving his

marching orders for dissent.

A furious Postecoglou had to be held back by Diomis and other officials from entering the field.

With South Melbourne in tatters, midfielder Goran Lozanovski was soon sent off for a crude foul.

Marconi's South Korean import Pan-Keun

HEY SEVEN; LIFT YOUR GAME

With rain coming down in almost biblical proportions, here we had a game with 8 goals, 2 red cards, hotly debated refereeing decisions, and even visiting coach Angie Postecoglou being restrained on the sideline by the fourth official, Con Diomis. In summary, we had an action packed match that was brimful of excitement and controversy and surely would have made even the most apathetic sports fan take notice on Sunday morning

television. Would have, that is, if Channel 7 had taken the trouble to show highlights from it. Many applauded when the mainstream commercial channel were awarded the television rights, believing commercial television exposure would bring the game into the lounge rooms of Mr and Mrs Public and ultimately convince them to come along to the game. Sadly, the early indications are that any exposure football will

receive from Channel Seven will be limited, and this has been reinforced by their decision not to cover the upcoming Soccerroo - USA clash. Channel Seven have scored an own goal with football fans on this one, as the previous broadcasters, SBS, would certainly have provided slow-motion replays of every incident had they been retained on the job.

comment by
Fred Leggett

Emmertson sets up Canberra mauling

By Ted Simmons

Striker Norm Tome broke his scoring drought with a goal after 27 seconds as Sydney Olympic coasted to an uninspiring 5-nil win over Canberra Cosmos at Belmore Sports Ground on Sunday night.

Tome, who had

failed to find the target in the opening National Soccer League rounds added a second later in the half before being replaced early in the second session.

Olympic had the game locked up in the first 20 minutes with two simple goals created by Brett Emmertson.

From the kick off Emmertson crossed to the

SYDNEY OLYMPIC 5
CANBERRA COSMOS 0

Venue: Belmore Sportsground

Referee: J Blaney

Attendance:

Scorers:

SOLY: Tome 1, 30, Cardozo 13, Emmertson 82, N Carle 89

Man of the Match:

Brett Emmertson SOLY

unmarked Tome for the opener while a similarly unmarked Pablo Car-

dozo headed the second 12 minutes later from another Emmertson cross.

asics

Kim later scored from a penalty and captain Brad Maloney struck from open play before South Melbourne sweeper Tansel Baser scored a consolation goal eight minutes from time.

South Melbourne had apparently an iron grip on the three points by half time with two goals. Lozanovski firmly struck a volley just outside the penalty box in the 25th minute.

The ball bounced and took a deflection giving Marconi

keeper Ante Covic no chance in the wet and slippery conditions.

Lozanovski was involved in the second goal nine minutes later when his free kick on the byline was headed in from close range by Baser.

Despite the refereeing controversy, South Melbourne coach Postecoglou said: "I couldn't be prouder of all my players from whom I have no complaints."

"We totally outplayed them in the first half and the ten minutes of chaos

allowed Marconi to take over."

Marconi coach Frank Farina said: "I can understand how Angie must be feeling as I would be spewing."

"We scored two goals when they were a man down and I would be upset in their position."

"It was a collective effort from my players after having been totally overrun by them."

"We knew South's strength in the midfield, that's why I shifted Mike Smith into that line."

Glory go top as Halpin grabs two

By Digby Beacham

A stunning double by Soccerroo Troy Halpin had a dual reward for Perth Glory in Sunday's National Soccer League match at Perth Oval.

Halpin's twin strikes, including a genuine goal of the year contender, secured the WA side a pulsating 3-1 win and outright top spot on the Ericsson Cup ladder.

After four games for former East German national coach Bernd Stange, Perth has ten points courtesy of three wins and a draw.

Halpin proved to Stange he was worthy of a berth in Glory's starting line-up with a scintillating display.

The former Newcastle Breaker opened his account in the fourth minute after a delicate 1-2 with John Markovski, but it was his second half offering which whipped the 16,738 fans into a frenzy.

Sydney United keeper Andrew Crews came off his line in the 49th minute to clear a ball, but could only manage to pump it near the halfway line.

**PERTH GLORY 3
SYDNEY UNITED 1**
Venue: Perth Oval
Referee: E Lennie
Attendance:
Scorers:
PERTH: Halpin 4, 49, Markovski 14
SYDNEY: Stojanovski
Man of the Match:
Troy Halpin PERTH

Sydney, with playing coach David Mitchell wielding an enormous influence, hit back late in the half when Mile Stojanovski rammed a header past Perth goalkeeper Danny Milosevic.

Perth coach Stange was satisfied with the win, but said his team could improve considerably.

"The most important thing in soccer is a result and if I had paid for a ticket today, I'd thought I had good entertainment," Stange said.

"But we were up and down and were very very lucky to lead 2-1 at halftime."

Mitchell was proud of the way his young charges

Halpin, alert as ever, saw Crews out of his territory and smashed a 45 metre shot which found the net halfway up.

That goal gave Perth a 3-1 buffer, although the scoreline could have been much different had both teams capitalised on a glut of scoring opportunities.

Perth looked set to blow the visitors away with a near faultless opening 20 minutes highlighted by Halpin's goal and a typical bullocking goal by Markovski in the 14th minute.

rallied when under siege

"The credit must go to my players, they never stopped trying," Mitchell said.

Mitchell lamented his unbelievable miss seconds after halftime which would have tied the game.

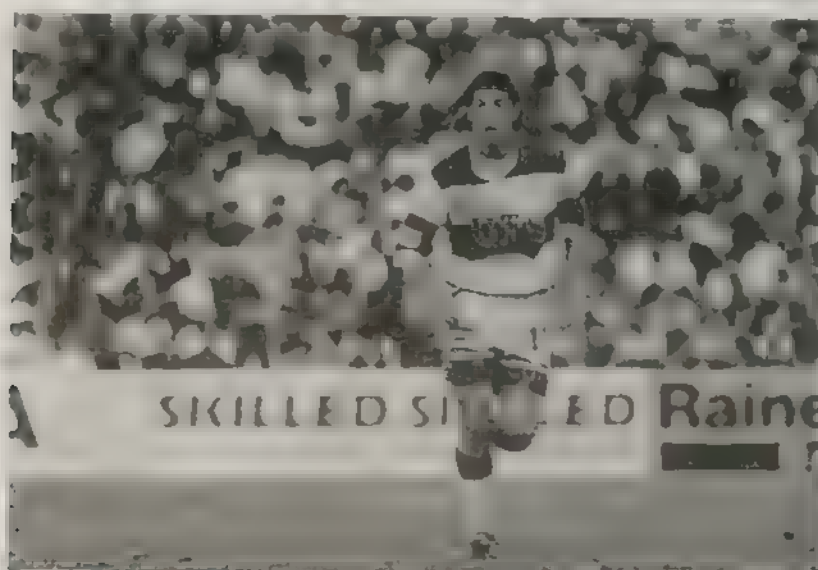
"That was the turning point. If I'd scored then it would have given us a tremendous lift," Mitchell said.

THOSE AMAZING SECOND HALF HIGHLIGHTS

HALFTIME: Farina rips in and questions the player's pride. Embarrassing was the buzz word and the players were asked by the coach to justify the crowd spending their hard earned cash on a miserable wet night to watch them play. Quote from Farina: "Get stuck in and @%##%ing compete. I don't care if we go down 5-0 but throw everything into it. But if anybody gets sent off I'll have their balls."

- 0-2 47m - Z. Babic one on one with keeper and Petkovic legs save a goal.
- 1-2 51m - Awaritefe brilliant goal
- 2-2 55m - Longo scores from corner
- 3-2 57m - Awaritefe again
- 57m - Panopoulos RED CARD
- 63m - Lozanovski RED CARD
- 4-2 68m - Kim Penalty
- 5-2 75m - Maloney scores his 4th out of 4 games
- 5-3 82m - Baser heads from corner

ROSS MUSSO



Brett Emmerton: scored late goal in 5-0 mauling of Cosmos

"Canberra went wrong tonight as we went wrong against Sydney United last week," said Olympic coach Branko Culina.

"Hopefully tonight's game will give us back confidence and the self pride we lost last week."

Canberra offered little organised resistance allowing the Olympic players freedom to control and move the ball. It took Canberra until the 23rd minute to penetrate the Olympic penalty area, a space reached only twice in the opening session.

On the half hour Tome snapped up his

second goal when he strode down the left and calmly chipped the ball over the advancing keeper to make it 3-nil.

Chances went begging for Olympic with Jason Culina hitting the post and having a shot cleared off the line and Cardozo also hitting the post.

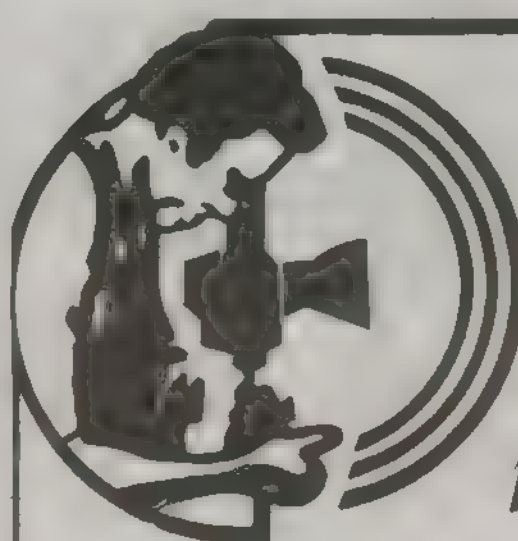
Canberra's only real opportunity came 10 minutes from the break when Peter Buljan received the ball nine metres in front of goal but tried to position better and lost control.

Olympic eased down in the second half allowing Canberra to have

more impact but the visitors were still unable to make headway against the tight Olympic defence.

Emerton, who had been quiet in the second half, added to the score in the 82nd minute when he took advantage of a missed clearance from a corner and substitute Nick Carle collected the last one minute from time with a left foot drive.

"We were beaten by a better team and our mistakes. We played well last week against Marconi but can't achieve consistency," said Canberra coach Rale Rasic.



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AN Inside Soccer FEATURE

Mark Viduka burst on to the Australian scene as a teenage student at the Australian Institute of Sport.

And after running away with practically every single honour in the National Soccer League, including Golden Boot and Player of the Year while still a kid, the man they call the V Bomber headed for Europe.

Despite some unhappy times lately at Croatia Zagreb, Viduka is one of the hottest properties in Europe.

As *Inside Soccer* went to press it looked odds on that he would put his pen to a deal which would make him a millionaire and take him to success-hungry Glasgow Celtic.

WHEN GLASGOW Celtic were bundled out of the European Cup their immediate priority became obvious; get a striker.

Harald Brattback, the \$5million Norwegian, had already proven a flop, and with Viduka proving that he had the ability against the Bhoys the Scottish press began a steady campaign to sign the likeable Aussie.

And with a figure of \$8.03 million being bandied about, not including Viduka's personal term, Scottish fans were hopeful that the Celts would get their man.

But the Celtic transfer target Marko Viduka has admitted he is still some distance from joining the Scottish champions despite it agreeing a fee with Croatia Zagreb.

The Australian striker has had talks with Parkhead general manager Jock Brown and was expected to be in Glasgow to complete the projected Stg3 million which would make the man they call the V Bomber a millionaire.

But Viduka says nothing has yet been finalised, with the issue of

the player's work permit - which could delay his debut for up to a month - still to be resolved.

"I have spoken to Jock Brown but I haven't signed anything and I am not a Celtic player yet," he told *Inside Soccer*.

"I'm more hopeful now than I was before that I will sign as a deal has been done between the clubs.

"But we still have a lot of talking to do

"It depends on a lot of things but I am now leaving it to my agent."

The 22-year-old also confirmed he had other options open to him, even though his preferred destination still appeared to be Glasgow.

"I have a couple of good offers on the table from German clubs but it's fair to say Celtic are my first choice," he said.

And Viduka's mind could be made a little clearer with the news that the Parkhead club has also signed Lubomir Moravcik.

Both players are internationalists and will provide badly needed options for beleaguered

former Socceroo coach Dr Jozef Venglos.

Celtic supporters have watched in dismay as their biggest - and, in financial terms, only - rivals, Glasgow Rangers, have broken the bank to prove just how ambitious they are.

The appointment of Dick Advocaat at Rangers sparked an even bigger spending spree than the one embarked on by Walter Smith the previous summer.

As one big name after another arrived at Ibrox, Celtic fans' disappointment and frustration grew as Egil Olsen, Tommy Svensson and Gerard Houllier decided they didn't want to coach Celtic.

Humbled in a Champions' League qualifier by Croatia Zagreb and knocked out of the League Cup by Airdrie, the club's penny-pinching approach has seen them go backwards.

The belated appointment of former Czech and Australian national boss Dr Venglos meant that Celtic were unable to take advantage of the Bosman ruling the way Rangers had in the case of Rod Wallace, now their top scorer.

DOING WHAT VIDUKA DOES BEST:

Scoring goals. Now Marko Viduka could become practically a millionaire if he teams up with Glasgow Celtic.

Mark Viduka

SUPER CELT

INSIDE SOCCER



is making a lot of the fact that I've scored only one goal but last season

I scored 18, I was the country's second top scorer and no one said

anything about it.

"I know I can score goals but I have to be

given a fresh start and hopefully that's what will happen at Celtic,"

he told *Inside Soccer*.



STORY WRITTEN
BY Stuart Bell
and our international
wire services

Watkins snatches late winner

By Ted Simmons

LAST-MINUTE selection Kresimir Marusic and substitution Daniel Watkins joined forces to give Northern Spirit a 2-1 victory over Melbourne Knights in their Round 4 NSL match at North Sydney Oval on Friday.

Watkins, a Northern Spirit apprentice, became the hero of the 13,654 crowd when he snatched the winner four minutes from time after the Knights had unexpectedly levelled the score seven minutes earlier.

He completed a 50 yard run in which he beat two defenders, lost the ball, picked up the rebound and placed his shot in the left corner of the goal.

"I got lucky with the deflection which fell to my feet," said Watkins.

Marusic was chosen after a fitness test on his suspect knee and had an outstanding match.

He put the Spirit ahead in the 27th minute when striker

**NORTHERN SPIRIT 2
MELBOURNE KNIGHTS 1**
Venue: North Sydney Oval
Referee: M Shield
Attendance:
Scorers:
SPRT: Marusic 27, Watkins 86
MEL: Carl 19
Man of the Match:
Kresimir Marusic SPRT

Graham Arnold cut the ball to him after a Clayton Zane cross glanced off the crossbar to the Spirit player/coach.

Marusic fired the ball at keeper Martin John but it rebounded from the keeper onto the legs of Marusic who was following through and bounced into the net.

The Spirit dominated the match against a deeply defending Melbourne and should have scored at least another six goals with Zane the main offender.

"We saw the same thing happen against Iran where you get punished if you don't finish off your chances," said Arnold.

"They had one shot in 90

minutes but the positive result from the match was the number of chances we created."

In the opening minutes Marusic had twice set Zane in scoring positions but each shot went wide.

Approaching halftime, a Marusic shot was saved by John and the keeper a few minutes later made another brilliant parry from a block-buster by Paul Bilokapic.

Despite the slender lead the Spirit produced waves of attack in the second half and only the reflexes and agility of the Melbourne keeper kept the visitors in the game.

He successively tipped over an effort from Luke Casserly and somehow man-



Kresimir Marusic: scored the opener and had an outstanding match against his old club

aged to block another chance from Zane from a few metres range.

As the Spirit continued to pour forward, one of the few breakaways by the Knights found Harry Carl with only Spirit keeper Paul

Henderson to beat in the 79th minute and levelled the score. Watkins replaced Arnold one minute later after the coach had hit the crossbar and quickly settled into an attacking role.

"Our ball distribution was

slow and I was very disappointed at conceding a goal," said Arnold.

"Zane was down in the mouth after the match but I told him every player has a bad spell and you have to work your way out of it."

Young Falcons grab hard points

THE GIPPSLAND Falcons returned home with a hard earned 2-1 victory over the Newcastle Breakers in their Ericsson Cup soccer clash at Breaker Sta-

dium on Friday night.

After a first half of few incidents, the game burst into life in the second half. Archie Thompson opened the scoring in the 53rd min-

ute for the Falcons with a low drive from 25 metres that flew past Breakers goalkeeper Brad Swancott.

Midfielder Will Hastie made it 2-0 after catching out the Breakers defence napping the 61st minute.

The Breakers pulled one back in the 77th minute when John Buonavoglia nodded the ball over the Falcons goalkeeper.

Newcastle was forced into a late change in goal when its first

choice goalkeeper Bobby Catlin withdrew from the side after coming down with a stomach virus on his way to the game and his place was taken by Olyroo keeper Swancott.

Falcons coach Stuart Munro was particularly pleased with the effort shown by the new young players in his team.

"We've got six 19 and 20-year-olds in our team. Last season this was a game we would have drawn but we



showed some real quality for about 45 minutes of the game and for the remainder we battled hard," he said.

"I feel we'll only get better from here."

Breakers coach Lee Sterrey while happy with his team's effort said his defenders were to blame at two set plays which cost them the two goals.

"We're obviously going to learn the hard way," he said. "But on the bright side we're a young team and we played a good brand of football."

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**NEWCASTLE BREAKERS 1
GIPPSLAND FALCONS 2**
Venue: Austral Park
Referee: B MacKay
Attendance: 3,496
Scorers:
NEWC: Buonavoglia 77
GIPS: Thompson 53, Hastie 61
Man of the Match:
Brad Wiczciorck NEWC

Wehrman sparks Strikers

An inspired performance from Socceroos midfielder Kasey Wehrman steered Brisbane Strikers to a comfortable 1-0 win over last years grand finalist Carlton in their Ericsson Cup clash at Suncorp Stadium.

Wehrman produced a man-of-the-match performance against Carlton which had the incentive of bidding for top spot on the table if it had won.

Veteran striker Andy Harper produced the only goal of the game in the 54th minute when he latched onto a Sean

Cranney cross to head home at the far post.

The Strikers dominated proceedings particularly in the first half as Carlton struggled to get out of first gear.

Wehrman, who left with the Socceroos on Monday for a one-off match against the United States, was dazzling in midfield outclassing his more experienced opponent, former Socceroo Andrew Marth.

Strikers coach John Kosmina rated Wehrman as one of several of the Strikers best performers in a polished

display which only saw Carlton strike back as any sort of threat in the dying stages.

But he also added a slight rider to Wehrman's effort.

"Kasey overdoes it at times and all his good stuff he does he puts a question mark on it by

losing possession," Kosmina said.

The clash between Marth and Wehrman was one of several interesting duels which saw referee David Dwight separate players on two occasions following some heated clashes.

Harper had two op-

portunities to put the home-side ahead before the break but was unable to capitalise in front of goal.

The first chance came in the 14th minute after an excellent build-up from hardworking striker Reece Tollenare who nutmegged Socceroo Simon Colosimo before slipping a pass to Harper whose snap shot went wide.

In the 25th minute Harper raced into the box off a Wehrman pass but mishit his attempt after being knocked off balance. Carlton signalled just before the break they weren't going to surrender without a fight when Marth took on the Strikers defence and shot just wide.

Carlton showed some early second half fight when a powerful Marth shot was headed off the line by midfielder Nick Meredith with keeper Clint Bolton stranded.

Bolton, who has come in for some criticism during his time with the Strikers, had a superb game and was one of Kosmina's star performers.

Oz Tel not in the hunt

DESPITE a media campaign and overwhelming support from the man in the street former Socceroo coach Terry Venables will not be named new England coach.

Instead incumbent Glenn Hoddle has survived a vicious campaign to have him ousted with the news of the signing of a new contract.

Hoddle agreed a new contract with the Football Association on Friday that links his income to success on the pitch, the FA said.

Hoddle had widely been reported in the English media as asking for a 40 percent Stg100,000 (\$A270,340) a-year pay rise to take him nearer to the salary of leading premier league club managers.

A statement from the FA said: "Agreement has been reached between the England coach and the FA following a review of his contract. His new financial package is linked to success in Euro 2000. He has been promised further financial rewards the further England progress."

Hoddle will need to turn things round if he is to benefit from the arrangement after England's poor start to their qualifying campaign.

After losing in Sweden they were held to a goalless home draw by Bulgaria and struggled to an unimpressive 3-0 victory against Luxembourg.

They have four points from three games and



Wolves scrap for home point

Adelaide City erased some of last seasons national soccer league play-off nightmare with a spirited 1-1 draw against Wollongong at Brandon Park on Sunday in blustery conditions. The Wolves eliminated City in the first round of the play-offs doing the damage in the first leg at home with a 3-0 thrashing.

The Zebras were em-

barrassed by that defeat and though under intense pressure in this match fought hard to secure a draw.

Both goals came in the opening 31 minutes from brilliantly taken free kicks. Wolves defender Alvin Ceccoli left Zebras keeper Jason Petkovic rooted to the goal line with a curling 20 metre shot in the 21st minute which took

a slight deflection on its goal-bound route.

Almost immediately the Wolves should have been 2-0 up but ex-Zebra striker Kosta Salapasis couldn't beat Petkovic with an unmarked header from just a few metres. Then against the run of play in the 31st minute the Zebras were level through prolific marksman Damian

**WOLLONGONG CITY 1
ADELAIDE CITY 1**
Venue: Brandon Park
Referee: S Micallef
Attendance: 5,168
Scorers:
WOLL: Ceccoli 21
ADLC: Mori 31
Man of the Match:
Alex Tobin ADLC

Mori. The League's leading goalscorer last season beat Wollongong keeper Les Pogliacomi on his near-side with a blistering 20 metre shot.

Wollongong piled on the pressure in the second half with the aid of a strong breeze but couldn't break down the Zebras defence.

Petkovic was not forced to make a second half save with Wollongong left to shoot from distance. Wolves coach Nick Theodorakopoulos was disappointed with the draw in what was the club's first home game for the season.

Wollongong had the better of the midfield exchanges but lacked the cutting edge up front. Young defender Sebastian Sinozic did a great marking job on Mori while Wolves defender George Souris also had a fine game.

City skipper Alex Tobin marshalled his side through a number of anxious moments in the second half and the visitors had the best chance of the half with Korean signing Dong Ki Kim forcing a point-blank save from Pogliacomi in the 62nd minute.



Venables at a NSL match flanked by Raul Blanco, the man who has succeeded him as Socceroo boss

trail Sweden and leaders Poland who both have six points from two matches. England's next qualifier is at home to Poland on March 27.

Hoddle's original contract, signed after the departure of Terry Venables following Euro 96, included a clause for a pay rise after the World Cup.

Hoddle delayed signing it, saying he was unsure how far into the future he wanted to commit himself.

"I was asked to sign a new long-term contract when I came out of the World Cup and I could have trebled my money if I had gone down that route," he said recently.

"Instead, I told the FA I wanted time to think about it and I was fair with them."

Venables, the man of the people, was favoured by Fleet Street to reclaim his old job, with few in Britain pausing to think on his flop with the Socceroos.

Young Matildas Get Dutch Draw

A missed penalty cost the Australian womens youth soccer team when they recovered for a 1-1 draw against the Netherlands Youth team at Kloetinge on Friday night.

AIS-based goalkeeper Joanne Butland dealt easily with the early Dutch attacks until three minutes before half time when a high cross was bustled into the net.

Australia levelled the score 20 minutes into the second half when a free kick was deflected into the Dutch goal by one of the defenders.

Strikers Kelly Golebiowski and Jessica Halpenny were causing havoc for the Dutch rearguard with Golebiowski hitting the woodwork and missing the penalty after being brought down inside the area.

The teams met again in the final tour match on Sunday as Inside Soccer was going to press.



NORTHMEAD SIGNS SCOREBOARD



NSL (ERICSSON CUP) ROUND 4

Friday 30 October

Newcastle Breakers 1
Buonavoglia 77

Gippsland Falcons 2
Thompson 53
Hastie 61

Northern Spirit 2
Marusic 27
Watkins 86

Melbourne Knights 1
Carl 79

Saturday 31 October

Marconi Fairfield 5
Awaritefe 51, 57
Longo 55
Kim pen
Maloney

South Melbourne 3
Baser 34, 82
Lozanovski 25

Sunday 01 November

Brisbane Strikers 1
Harper

Carlton 0

Sydney Olympic 5
Tome 1, 30
Cardozo 13
Emmertson 82
N Carle 89

Canberra Cosmos 0

Perth Glory 3
Halpin 4, 49
Markovski 14

Sydney United 1
Sterjovski

Wollongong Wolves 1
Ceccoli 21

Adelaide City 1
Mori 31

BYE: Adelaide Sharks

NATIONAL YOUTH LEAGUE

Northern Division

Newcastle 3 • Northern Spirit Colts 0
C Mansley 2
M Sloane

Northern Spirit 1
M Langdon

NSWIS 0

Sydney United 2
R Angievski 2

Sydney Utd Colts 1
G Trajkovski

Marconi 2
V Tomasevic
M Haggard

Olympic Academy 0

Sydney Olympic 5
C Gonzalez
L Miott
H Jomaa
J Bakis
L Carle

ACT Academy 0

Wollongong 2
N Spencer
P Tuturevski

Marconi Colts 0

Qld Academy of Sport
late kick off

AIS

Southern Division

VIS 3
S McDonald 2
A Motsiopoulos

Melbourne
H Matkovic

South Melbourne 1
A Mashorian

Gippsland Falcons 0

Bulleen Inter v Albury Wodonga postponed
BYE: Carlton

WOMEN'S YOUTH INTERNATIONAL

Netherlands 1
Australia 1
own goal 65

LEADING SCORERS

4 Vaughan COVENY (SMEL)
4 Brad MALONEY (MARC)
4 Damian MORI (ADL)
3 Francis AWARITEFE (MARC)
3 Pablo CARDOZO (SOLY)
3 Simon COLOSIMO (CARL)
2 Tansel BASER (SMEL)
2 Peter BULJAN (CANB)
2 Troy HALPIN (PRTH)
2 John GIBSON (ADSH)
2 Jeremy HARRIS (BRIS)
2 Chris KALANTZIS (SOLY)
2 Pan KIM (MARC)
2 Mark RUDAN (SPRT)
2 Mile STERJOVSKI (SUTD)
2 Archie THOMPSON (GIPS)
2 Norman TOME (SOLY)
2 Joe TRICARICO (CARL)
1 Clayton BELL (GIPS)
1 John BUONAVOGLIA (NEWC)
1 Con BOUTSIANIS (PRTH)
1 Marco BRESCIANO (CARL)
1 Harry CARL (MELK)
1 Nick CARLE (OLY)

1 Alvin CECCOLI (WOLL)
1 Sean CRANNEY (BRIS)
1 Michael CURCIJA (SMEL)
1 Bobby DESPOTOVSKI (PRTH)
1 Saso DIMOSKI (WOLL)
1 Alex DURIC (ADSH)
1 Steve EAGLETON (UTD)
1 Brett EMMERTON (SOLY)
1 Andy HARPER (BRIS)
1 Will HASTIE (GIPS)
1 Harry JAMES (CANB)
1 Ivan KELIC (MELK)
1 Lubo LAPANSKY (CARL)
1 Dominic LONGO (MARC)
1 Goran LOZANOVSKI (SMEL)
1 John MARKOVSKI (PRTH)
1 Kresimir MARUSIC (SPRT)
1 Dino MENNILLO (ADLC)
1 David MITCHELL (SUTD)
1 Alex MOREIRA (CARL)
1 Paul STRUDWICK (PRTH)
1 Anthony SURJAN (WOLL)
1 Reece TOLLENAERE (BRIS)
1 Danny TOWNSEND (SUTD)
1 Kris TRAJANOVSKI (MARC)
1 Danny VIDAKOVIC (ADSH)
1 Andy VLAHOS (CARL)
1 Daniel WATKINS (SPRT)
1 Kasey WEHRMAN (BRIS)

ERICSSON CUP 1998/99

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
1 Perth Glory	4	3	1	0	8	3	10
2 Sydney Olympic	4	3	0	1	10	5	9
3 Marconi Fairfield	4	3	0	1	11	7	9
4 South Melbourne	4	2	1	1	8	7	7
5 Brisbane Strikers	4	2	1	1	7	6	7
6 Carlton	4	2	0	2	9	4	6
7 Gippsland Falcons	3	2	0	1	4	3	6
8 Northern Spirit	4	2	0	2	4	6	6
9 Sydney United	4	1	1	2	6	7	4
10 Adelaide Sharks	3	1	1	1	4	3	4
11 Adelaide City	4	1	1	2	5	6	4
12 Newcastle Breakers	4	1	1	2	4	6	4
13 Wollongong City	3	1	1	1	3	6	4
14 Melbourne Knights	3	0	0	3	2	7	0
15 Canberra Cosmos	4	0	0	4	3	12	0

ERICSSON CUP: ROUND 5 (6-8 November 1998)

Friday 06 November

Northern Spirit v Wollongong Wolves

7.30pm

Saturday 07 November

Gippsland Falcons v Marconi

7.30pm

Sunday 08 November

South Melbourne v Sydney Olympic

6.00pm

Melbourne Knights v Brisbane

3.00pm

Adelaide Sharks v Newcastle

4.30pm

Sydney United v Carlton

5.00pm

Perth Glory v Canberra Cosmos

4.00pm

BYE: Adelaide City

* Match times correct at press time - check with local press or club for changes

Form Guide

HOME

DRAW

HOME

AWAY

DRAW

HOME

HOME



LAST FIVE HOMES (league games)

Northern Spirit	W	W	L
Gippsland Falcons	W	W	D
South Melbourne	W	W	L
Melbourne Knights	L	W	W
Adelaide Sharks	D	W	L
Sydney United	W	D	D
Perth Glory	W	W	D

LAST FIVE AWAYS (league games)

Wollongong Wolves	W	L	W	W	D
Marconi	W	L	D	L	W
Sydney Olympic	L	W	L	D	W
Brisbane	L	L	L	L	D
Newcastle	L	D	D	L	D
Carlton	L	W	W	L	W
Canberra Cosmos	L	L	L	D	L

1998/99 National Soccer League	ADLC	ADSH	BRIS	CANB	CARL	GIPS	MARC	MELK	NEWC	SPRT	PRTH	SMEL	SYDO	SUTD	WOLL
ADELAIDE CITY								3-0			0-1				
ADELAIDE SHARKS												1-1			
BRISBANE STRIKERS					1-0		3-2				2-2				
CANBERRA COSMOS		1-3					1-2								4-0
CARLTON	4-1									1-2					
GIPPSLAND FALCONS	1-0														
MARCONI FAIRFIELD												5-3		2-0	
MELBOURNE KNIGHTS															1-2
NEWCASTLE BRKRS			2-1			1-2									
NORTHERN SPIRIT								2-1					0-2		
PERTH GLORY										2-0				3-1	
SOUTH MELBOURNE						2-1			2-0						
SYDNEY OLYMPIC			2-1	5-0											
SYDNEY UNITED									1-1				4-1		
WOLLONGONG CITY	1-1														



NORTHMEAD SIGNS SCOREBOARD



Brad Maloney: The Marconi skipper is at the top of the NSL goalscorer's chart



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ERICSSON CUP SOCCER

6 - 8 November: Round 5

Friday

Northern Spirit v Wollongong Wolves 7.30pm

Saturday

Gippsland Falcons v Marconi 7.30pm

Sunday

South Melbourne v Sydney Olympic 6.00pm

Melbourne Knights v Brisbane 3.00pm

Adelaide Sharks v Newcastle 4.30pm

Sydney United v Carlton 5.00pm

Perth Glory v Canberra Cosmos 4.00pm

Wollongong and south eastern Sydney listeners can hear live updates on the Ericsson Cup as well as interviews on *Sunday Soccer* VOX FM 106.9, 9.00pm every Sunday with *Inside Soccer* editor, Bruce Campbell.



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NOTE: all information believed correct at time of going to press. Please check with daily press, your club or Soccer Australia for changes to scheduled kick offs.

I won't abandon my style

SYDNEY OLYMPIC coach Branko Culina isn't about to rush in and change his style of play.

Noted for his brand of patient build-up football played through the midfield his is a style which delights the purists and pulls the fans.

But at times it can be costly, especially against a side which plays a hard man-marking style of play.

"I've always said that it would take four or five weeks to get it going at Olympic," said Culina.

"We were always needing time to gel.

"Don't forget that Olympic finished ninth last season and while other clubs are rebuilding so are we.

"I can't change my style of football because that is something that I believe in."

But Culina does concede that there are times when he has thought it would be easier to switch to a push and run or long ball style.

"Look, it is frustrating at times," he admits.

"It doesn't always come together, and you can't always win games.

"But I've been lucky at both Sydney United and Sydney Olympic because I have had some good players. Maybe that 4-1 defeat by Sydney United was a blessing in disguise because it might have given us an education that we aren't quite what some of us would have otherwise thought.

"There is no doubt that Olympic is a good side and we have too many good players not to be there when it counts.

"But we are rebuilding and we will have hiccups along the way."

As part of that rebuilding process Olympic signed Adem Poric from England in the off season and if the Sydney club does do well in this season's Ericsson Cup then it is likely that the silky midfielder will play a big part.

Culina agrees.

"There is no doubt that Poric is a very fine player.

"He has already shown in training that he has a lot of skill and I am sure that when he settles down he will show just what he can do.

"The club still has a fair bit to do, though.

"You have to understand that some of the players (in the squad) have been around on the fringe of senior soccer for quite a while now.

"It isn't that we have a lot of proven players in the squad.

"What we have is couple of youngsters and a few players like Juric, Augerinos and Baillie who really haven't been part of the first team squad on a regular basis.



"But they are working hard to establish themselves and I am pleased to have them on board."

Another essential ingredient of the Culina coaching style is installing a self belief in a player's own ability.

It is no secret in the game that the

former coach of the year places a lot of emphasis on the psychological nature of a player's make-up, spending a lot of time with his charges in order to get the best out of their personalities.

"I try to encourage the players at Sydney Olympic to believe that they can win every game," he says.

"It doesn't matter who they are playing or where they are playing, you have got to have that belief in yourself and your team-mates.

"We expect to win games because we build up ourselves to believe that we can.

"You have to be positive.

"But there are no easy games."

And the long ball game?

"It has crossed my mind a couple of times," he laughs.

"At times I have thought it would be easier to play the long ball game but you have to have a belief in what you are trying to do and also to understand that it is not always going to work.

"There are days when it doesn't go for you and you just have to accept that. When I was at Sydney United we got beaten by Newcastle and they were bottom of the table.

"I believe it is entertaining to play the passing game and keep possession.

"I think that the players enjoy that although we will have to learn to vary our play because we have been punished by teams which go in hard and play the long ball and we certainly don't react well to that.

"We need to adjust to that (type of game) and learn how to react to it if we are going to truly be a top side."

The irony of soccer in the NSL



IN THE early '80s they were the two state league teams that the rest of Australian soccer wanted into the NSL to boost flagging crowds.

The-then named Melbourne and Sydney Croatia clubs were regularly out-drawing their national league colleagues at a time when NSL football was still played in winter.

The trick, of course, was how to get the two sleeping giants into the

national format without upsetting the applecart.

That was one of the reasons why Australian soccer set about a re-vamp with the introduction of the two conference set-up.

The regional look, unfortunately, was an abysmal failure but it did succeed in getting the two Croatias in - along with their massive crowd appeal.

Ironically, in the last few seasons some power brokers have claimed that it is the

presence of the two clubs, now re-named Sydney United and Melbourne Knights, that is holding the game back.

In the wake of constant antagonism from some administrators, or maybe coincidental to it, both clubs have suffered an alarming slump in fortunes.

Now, and with the simple home truth of

economic reality staring them in the face, they face extinction of a different kind.

Soccer in Australia is paying the price for recent improvements to its structure.

Sydney United were forced to play last season at Parramatta Stadium after their one-time president Ivan Simic toyed with the idea as a means of attracting bigger crowds.

The club had spent considerably on upgrading its Edensor Park

home but were keen to capitalise on the new wave of popularity sweeping Australian soccer.

Parramatta Stadium was seen as the answer. Instead, it saw United's traditional supporter base evaporate while the new fan just didn't come.

In short, it was a flop.

"Last season we didn't make anything out of playing at Parramatta," a club official told *Inside Soccer*.

"Instead of making money from the gate the club actually owed after it had to pay the fifteen thousand dollars or so for ground rent and security each game.

"We had to give away two thousand tickets a game just to attract people to Parramatta."

That was in stark contrast to the new dawn that Simic and his board were looking towards.

"It just didn't work out," one board member told us.

"It was one thing going to Parramatta as an experiment but quite another to be told that we had to move there permanently.

"After all, which club in the league has a ground as good as ours?"

In fact, very few clubs actually do own their own grounds and most of them would like to be

in the position of having Edensor Park as a home base, the compact west Sydney ground being acknowledged as one of the best in the league.

The net result of playing 'away from home' is a budget deficit of some \$300,000 in a 26 game season.

That, to most clubs operating in the current set-up, is the difference between survival or going bust.

And that is the reality that Melbourne Knights were facing up to just

By Paul Millar and Bruce Campbell

ALL ALONE ON THE TERRACES: the lone fan at Knights Park is testament to the irony of the NSL



WHO OWNS WHAT

Clubs which play at leased facilities: 9

Adelaide City (Hindmarsh Stadium)

Adelaide Hawks (Hindmarsh Stadium)

Brisbane Strikers (Suncorp Stadium)

Gold Coast Cosmos (Bunce Stadium)

Northern Spirit (North Sydney Oval)

Perth Glory (Perth Oval)

South Melbourne (Bob Lakeside) Jane Stadium

Sydney Olympic (Belmore Sports Ground)

Wollongong City (Broadon Park)

Clubs which own their stadiums: 6

Carlton (Optus Oval - owned by AFL mother club)

Gympie City (Gympie Oval)

Marconi Fairfield (Marconi Stadium)

Melbourne Knights (Knights Park)

Newcastle Breakers (Australia Park)

Sydney United (Sydney Oval)

Deans says no Glory in Perth

MELBOURNE KNIGHTS are signing tall defender Craig Deans to bolster the national soccer league clubs lightweight backline.

Coach Vid Horvat has been desperately searching for a leader to marshal his inexperienced young side and hopes that the 24-year-old from Western Australia will fit the bill.

The former WA state representative said he turned his back on offers to join Perth Glory because he believed he had a brighter future with the Melbourne Knights.

"I'd love to play for the Melbourne Knights as they are a

club that wants to win something ... more than Perth Glory which wants to establish itself as a business first," he said.

"I believe the Melbourne Knights are a better club to play for."

Horvat said the stopper-sweeper was two weeks away from peak fitness but hopefully the Victorian side would come to terms with its sister club the Western Knights in Perth.

The Knights have had a poor start to the current Ericsson Cup campaign.

Horvat says he's not hitting the panic button yet but time is

running out for several players.

The Knights coach still has a long list of walking wounded at Somers Street with defender Zroan Markovski an unlikely starter and the coach running out of patience with injury-prone utility Ransford Banini.

Horvat has told his players they're now playing for their careers.

He admits that after six weeks at the helm he's only now coming to terms with the strengths and weaknesses of his squad.

"After this weekend (the match against Northern Spirit) something has to be done, no

excuses," he says.

"I will have had them long enough by then; its going to be tough to tell them as we only have a small squad," he said.

The Knights were thrashed 3-0 by Adelaide City on the weekend after going down 2-1 to Wollongong in their season home opener.

Horvat said City had been too organised for the Knights and former Ghanaian youth international Ransford Banini just could not hold two-goal hero Damian Mori.

The coach was obviously disappointed in Banini's form after he returned to the side following a carryover suspension from last season.

"Maybe it was my fault but I expected more from Banini," Horvat said.

"I thought he was the man for the job but at times he appeared to be sleeping," Horvat said.

Paul Mullar

Ozsoccer@majordomo: in off the net

WAS THE ref incompetent...is the striker a numpty...will Canberra win the league, and most importantly, how much is a beer at Optus Oval? No matter how way out your point of view, or how obscure your football question may be, there is a place where you can get all the answers, or an opinion off your chest, provided you have internet access, that is.

The Ozsoccer list is comprised of a group of individuals who, on a daily basis post their views on all things football related.

This forum consists of not only fans of just about every Ericsson Cup side, but also

a sprinkling of journalists, current players, fanzine editors and administrators. Some take themselves very, very, seriously, while most, thankfully, indulge in good natured banter.

If you can imagine sitting at a table in a cafe or pub with a group of mates discussing a match, with all the differing points of view, then that is probably fair description of what the Ozsoccer list is all about.

Even if you just want to read the postings without directly contributing, then you are free to 'lurk' on the list too.

For those 'newbies' who do want to take

an active part, you will be made most welcome, but if you do contribute beware; don't dare post the score from a delayed televised game prior to broadcast, or the internet police will come round and rip your modem off!

It's absolutely free, and if any of you netheads out there want to join simply send an email to "majordomo@thehub.com.au" and in the body of the mail type "subscribeozsoccer-1" that's an ell, not a one by the way. I know from personal experience.

Fred Leggett

July 4 set for World Cup semi double header

THE 1999 FIFA Women's World Cup semi-final match on July 4, 1999, at Stanford Stadium in Palo Alto, California, will be played as a doubleheader with the San Jose Clash of Major League Soccer, the Organizing Committee has announced.

Still subject to FIFA approval, the addition of the Clash game turns each of the Women's World Cup events into a doubleheader.

It was previously announced that the Women's World Cup semifinal in Boston on July 4 will also be played as a doubleheader with the New England Revolution of MLS.

The 1999 Women's World Cup will be a 32-match tournament, but with the doubleheader format, will be played over 17 dates.

All first-round games will be doubleheaders (24 games, 12 dates), as will the quarterfinals (four games, two dates).

The semifinals will be played as doubleheaders with Major League Soccer (two women's games/two MLS games, two dates) and the Third Place Match and Final Game (two games, one date) will be played as a doubleheader at the Rose Bowl in Pasadena, California on July 10, 1999.

If the U.S. Women's National Team ad-

vances to the semifinals, it will play at Stanford Stadium.

"We were already expecting July 4, 1999, to be a great day for soccer, but the addition of the Major League Soccer game adds extra excitement and entertainment to the festivities," said Women's World Cup President Marla Messing.

"We are hoping to celebrate the last Independence Day of the century with a historical event for American soccer."

The San Francisco Bay/San Jose venue will host five Women's World Cup matches.

One first-round doubleheader and a quarterfinal doubleheader will be played at Spartan Stadium in San Jose, while the semifinal match will be the only game staged at Stanford Stadium.

The venues for the 1999 FIFA Women's World Cup are: Boston, Mass. (Foxboro Stadium), Chicago, Ill. (Soldier Field), Los Angeles, Calif. (Rose Bowl), New York/New Jersey (Giants Stadium), Portland, Ore. (Civic Stadium), San Francisco Bay/San Jose (Spartan Stadium and Stanford Stadium) and Washington, D.C. (Jack Kent Cooke Stadium).

Australia became the 13th team to qualify for the Women's World Cup next summer, leaving just three berths in the 16-team field still open.

The Matildas join host USA, South American champion Brazil, CONCACAF champion Canada, Asian qualifiers China, Japan and North Korea, and European qualifiers Sweden, Italy, Norway, Denmark, Germany and Russia.

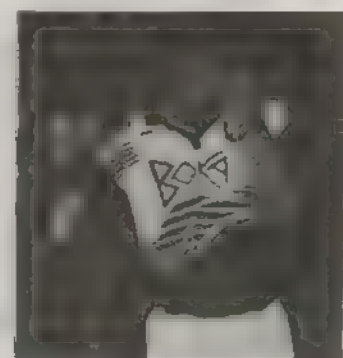
Stuart Bell

CARLTON SIGN MARKOVAC

CARLTON signed midfielder Robert Markovac on Friday before the weekend deadline

The former Melbourne Knights and Sydney United player had been training with the squad for some weeks and was immediately listed in the squad for the clash with Brisbane Strikers.

Prior to returning to Australia two seasons ago Markovac had played in Croatia, Belgium and Ireland.



last week before the lifeline was thrown to them by the overseas sale-on of former player, Marko Viduka.

With 25% of that \$8.03million transfer due to come to Knights Park the Melbourne club can now start to look at its future positively.

But that wasn't the case when Knights club officials spoke to the press openly about their financial plight.

Since the revelations were first made Knights president Steve Mandekic has made light of

Ivan Skunca as saying: "There's a possibility that we could be bankrupt before the end of the season".

But Skunca later denied the comments saying anything he did say was aimed at motivating supporters to get behind the club.

Coach Vid Horvat, who arrived late to prepare for the season and has been hit by a string of injuries since, tried to stay clear of the politics.

"I have a job to do, we have had many injuries already, the players are young but no

excuses its up to me, it will take time but it will happen," Horvat said.

The Knights were soundly beaten by an unimpressive Wollongong Wolves in their opening game and then suffered another hiding away to Adelaide City.

"We have plenty of skill in the side, but are lacking that experience and in some cases toughness and that's why I'm keen to sign a Scottish professional," Horvat said.

The question mark still hangs over the long term future of both clubs, however, with the cash raised from the sale of Viduka and the return to Edensor Park only masking a far more serious problem.

In short, their fans have just sopped turning up.

With such a tremendous commitment to Australian soccer in the past it would be a tragedy if the game turned its backs on the clubs in their hour of need.

Australian soccer needs both clubs, clubs which have produced a constant string of internationals over the last decade or so.

reports that the club might not see out the national soccer league season.

He said it was ready to dip into the international transfer market to bolster its squad.

Mandekic said the club expected to sign attacking midfielder Ivan Raguz from Singapore before Christmas and was in the hunt for an experienced striker from Scotland.

But the heavy debts, and a poor start to the season, is still sparking speculation about the club's future.

Mandekic, however, insisted that the Knights had a long-term future in the league and was prepared to spend money to strengthen a squad brimming with youngsters but thin on experience.

There has been talk that the club could cut its losses and return to the Victorian leagues and this was further fuelled when an article in the *Croatian Herald* said the club might drop out of the Ericsson Cup before the end of the season.

The newspaper also quoted vice president

Grella lands in match rig furore

By Paddy Agnew and Inside Soccer

EMPOLI, the struggling Serie A club to which Carlton's Vinnie Grella has been sent on loan, is at the centre of match-rigging allegations.

Fabrizio Corsi, president of Empoli, has denied either he or his club were involved in an alleged match-fixing attempt before the recent Serie A game against Sampdoria.

The Italian Football Federation (FIGC) opened an immediate investigation following a report from the designated match referee, Stefano Farina.



Farina told FIGC officials that Lorenzo Repetta, mayor of the small town of Castelletto d'Orba, had approached him, claiming to be a friend of Corsi and asking him to "help" Empoli.

The FIGC responded to the report by replacing Farina with reserve referee Piero Ceccarini.

Sampdoria won the game 3-0.

In media interviews, both Repetta and Corsi denied any wrongdoing.

"This whole story is absurd ... It has nothing to do with me or with Empoli.

"I never tried to bribe the referee, that's just a lie that discredits both me and Empoli", said Corsi.

The Empoli boss said he had had two brief business encounters with Repetta but denied the mayor was a friend.

Repetta said the match-fixing allegations were a result of a misunderstanding.

He said he had approached referee Farina to ask him for "help" in regard to a charity soccer match for a sick child from his town.

"All I asked Farina was for a hand in organising this game that I've been trying to organise for a long time now.

"Farina simply misunderstood my words, it's all a big misunderstanding and I told that to the FIGC investigators

"I'm the one who as mayor needs the help. Empoli has nothing to do with it", said Repetto.

Sampdoria coach Luciano Spalletti, coach of Empoli for five seasons from 1993 to 1998, told state radio RAI he found the allegations hard to believe.

"I'm upset because I know the Empoli directors well. It seems very strange to me that Empoli attempted to approach the referee, all the stranger if you think that in the last couple of weeks they have strengthened their squad with some very useful players," said Spalletti.

Under the FIGC code, even if there was no proof of the involvement of a director, employee or club member in any attempted corruption, the club still faces fines that range from compulsory relegation to division 2 to the deduction of points in Serie A.

SPECIAL FEATURE

JOHN MOTSON: The voice of Britain

By Frank Malley in London

John Motson's greeting is warm and melodious, though his voice has much the same effect on the busy hotel lounge as the entrance of a willow blonde.

Heads turn in every corner, men nod in our direction and there are knowing smiles and murmurs of recognition.

No, there's no such thing as a quiet chat with the undisputed voice of English soccer.

Just as there's no denying the passion with which Motson still approaches the game more than 26 years since he burst into viewers' consciousness on Match of the Day while describing Hereford's epic FA Cup victory over Newcastle.

Indeed, pin down Motty on any of soccer's burning issues and the evangelical zeal it inevitably arouses befits the son of a Methodist minister.

Such as his thoughts on managerial transfers like George Graham's move from Leeds to Tottenham.

"Managers should not be allowed to move during a season. I'd also ban player transfers," says Motson.

"You should start the season in August with your manager and squad and should survive or otherwise with those people.

"It's not fair on fans that they buy season tickets and players they've paid to see are asking for a move in October. Once a season starts no-one should move until the season

finishes."

The money-mad, television-hyped world of the Premiership is also a red rag to Motson's bullish temperament.

"It's overkill and I'm not sure the game can sustain it," he argues.

"Everybody's having a great time feeding off the game but, hold on, one day the grain is going to run out - the fat of the land will not be there forever.

"If pay-per-view television makes watching soccer comfortable and cheaper and more accessible you're persuading fans not to go to the grounds.

"It may be terrific for Manchester United, Arsenal and to an extent Liverpool or Chelsea, I'm not sure what pay-per-view does for Coventry or West Ham or Southampton.

"I don't want to see us with five or so super clubs and the rest just making up the numbers."

Numbers have been important to Motson down the years.

As have facts and figures and just about any other useless piece of information with which he could fill every spare second of commentary space.

The reason for his obsession, however, was plain fear.

"I was terrified of not knowing enough or of making a mistake. Probably I overdosed on that," he says.

Now he claims he could name at least two top commentators, though he is much too polite to do so, who use far more background information than he

does.

And there is no doubt the man who began his broadcasting career on Radio Sheffield, has featured on *This Is Your Life* and earlier this year prompted a 45-minute BBC1 tribute called *The Full Motty*, is today more loved than loathed.

For lines such as the "The Crazy Gang have beaten the Culture Club" which is how he described Wimbledon's shock victory over Liverpool in the 1988 FA Cup final.

And the time his research paid off in 1977 when he read in a magazine that there were 39 steps from the pitch at Wembley to the Royal Box, which allowed him to remark as Manchester United captain Martin Buchan collected the FA Cup: "How fitting that a man called Buchan should be first up the 39 steps."

"That got me out of trouble," he admits.

"It was my first Cup Final and I froze. I shouldn't really have done it. David Coleman opted out through illness at the last minute and I got put in before my time and it was a very poor commentary. I wasn't ready really but that remark rescued me.

"If I hadn't said that I don't think I would ever have done another cup final."

With the BBC having lost the rights to the FA Cup to commercial television more than 12 months ago, along with a string of other top sporting events, Motson will probably never again call a live FA Cup final.

Sean Douglas: The All White True Blue

IT MAY have been a long and winding road that brought New Zealand international Sean Douglas to Carlton, but as he settles into his second season with the Blues, he's loving every minute of it.

"We're like a big happy family and the club encourages this," he says.

"You really have to get along since we see each other 6 days a week, and spend a lot of time away interstate together.

"We have a very young side that is full of enthusiasm and confidence, and it's great to be in that sort of atmosphere."

Sean's roundabout route to Optus Oval took him from Auckland, where he played for Mt Wellington and North Shore United in New Zealand's national league to Singapore, then on to try his luck in Europe, before joining Gippsland Falcons in Australia.

Said Sean: "I left Auckland when I was twenty one to go and play in Singapore for a side called Tyrwhitt Securities who unfortunately went bankrupt that same year.

"However later that

year I was invited over to Denmark by a Lyngby player who had come to New Zealand for a working holiday and played at Mt Wellington.

"He set things up for me after seeing how I could play

"I didn't really have any idea what to expect in Denmark, but I trained with the first team, played in the youth side and sat on the bench for the first team.

"Henrik Larsen, who was top scorer in Euro 92 when Denmark won the tournament was one of the players in the side.

"I played there for one season, and I know I could have stayed in Denmark and probably gained a first team place, but life outside of soccer was really hard and I was very homesick."

Sean returned to New Zealand where he faxed his playing resume off to a number of Australian clubs.

Only one side, Gippsland Falcons responded, and after having paid his own fare, he accepted their offer of a two week trial, and was subsequently signed on by the Latrobe Val-

VOX POP

EACH WEEK one of *Inside Soccer's* roving reporter will wander the stadiums of our sun-burnt land seeking out the views of players, officials and fans on a certain topic.

This time FRED LEGGET took time out in the sunshine state to put northern fans under VOX POP.

FIRST CAB off the rank was ANDY HARPER, currently

SHOULD SOCCER AUSTRALIA ALLOW A NEW ZEALAND TEAM INTO THE NSL?

playing with Brisbane Strikers, as well as appearing regularly on SBS television.

Said Andy: "I have mixed feelings. I love the thought of strengthening football in our region and a New Zealand team in the Ericsson Cup would certainly fit that bill.

"However, I'm not

convinced that the financial encumbrance of such a venture could be met by our Ericsson Cup clubs. I would also hate the thought of strengthening New Zealand to the detriment of the Australian national team."

Andy certainly wasn't alone in his concern about such a move aid-

ing and abetting the enemy as it were, with his team-mate, goalkeeper CLINT BOLTON stating succinctly:

"I don't see why we should help them out," and fellow Striker KASEY WEHRMAN posing the question:

"Would Germany allow an Austria team into the Bundesliga?"

ley outfit.

"It took me a couple of games to break into the Falcons team, but after that I played in nearly every game," he says.

"Gippsland was certainly a step up from playing in New Zealand. They trained more, had better players and paid a lot more!

"I really enjoyed my time in Morwell, living with three other players Michael Reda, Scott Miller (Perth Glory) and Alex Miller who is now playing in the state league over in Western Australia.

"Playing alongside Warren Spink, Brian Bothwell and John Waddell helped my confidence and gave me valuable experience."

Carlton then came knocking and Sean made the transition from part time to full time football.

"I probably played better at Gippsland than I did at Carlton last year, but because it is a 'smaller' club and I was relatively unknown, nobody heard much about me," added the Kiwi.

"The lifestyle at Gippsland was not as intense compared with Carlton where success is expected, and serious enquires are made if it doesn't come.

"Looking back, Gippsland was probably the perfect stepping stone from New Zealand to Carlton.

"I went from 2 nights a week training in New Zealand to 4-5 nights a week at Gippsland to 8-9 times a week with Carlton.

"I think anyone stepping up from twice a week straight to the full time Carlton set-up would struggle.

"Carlton's full time approach usually has the players involved in a weights session twice a week in the mornings and one to one and a half hour sessions on the park every afternoon at 2pm.

"The players have a day off two days before the game and train the morning before a game.

"The full time ap-

proach paid dividends with the Blues going all the way to the final hurdle.

"It was great to be involved with such a professional and successful club.

"The week leading up to the Grand Final was an experience in itself.

"As for the final... devastated would be an understatement.

"I could handle it if we were outplayed and beaten fair and square, but to lose to such a controversial goal made it all the worse."

The Kiwi internationalist however, is confident that his side can go all the way this season.

"Obviously, our first goal is to make the top six," he says.

"We all realised that it would be a lot harder to repeat our success of last year, but media predictions of a bottom half finish have fuelled hot fires.

"All the teams seemed to have strengthened in the off season making for a very competitive league, and all of them are potential top six material.

"We have a team that is a lot quicker and will work harder than last year, and that is exactly what we need for this season - all the players are prepared to roll up

their sleeves and 'get dirty', even when the chips are down.

"We showed that attitude against Northern Spirit where we played 90% of the game a man down, and realistically could still have won the game."

Sean was a member of the New Zealand side who eliminated the Socceroos from the Confederation Cup with a 1-0 victory in Brisbane, so were those stories that the Kiwi's got to keep their tracksuits because of the victory true?

"We had to hand back our tracksuits, and all the other gear we were given," he laughs.

"The thing we got to keep because of the win was our strip. At the start of the tournament we were not allowed to keep our shirts, but after



First port of call: Sean Douglas as a Falcon

making the final, Soccer NZ agreed to let us hang on to them. Soccer in NZ is just that low at the moment, that they can't even afford to let a strip go!"

Sean's joy over making the Confederation Cup final was tempered, however, by the news that some teams were considering pulling out.

Explains Sean, "I'm dying to go to the Confederation Cup, but am very disappointed that France have pulled out, and that Brazil will be sending a weakened team.

"It will probably be my only chance to play against the world's best and it is slowly being eroded into a B Grade tournament.

"If we're going to play the top sides, I would rather play against their

best players."

Being a native of Auckland, Sean's name is one of the first mentioned when talk of admitting a New Zealand club side is made, and no doubt Carlton will have to fight off bids from any New Zealand consortium.

Sean however, is adamant that a Kiwi club would only enhance the Ericsson Cup.

"I think it would add a great new flavour to the Ericsson Cup," he says "and expose players to a slightly different brand of football.

"It would also appeal to the non soccer people who would come along and support their local club against the 'dreaded' Kiwis!

"I personally would love to see them included, but then I'm bi-

ased as I can think of nothing better than a paid trip home!"

While Sean has a long footballing future to look forward to he already has his eye on the day when he must hang up his boots.

Having completed a double degree in Mathematics and Finance at Auckland University prior to embarking on his overseas football escapades, the Carlton player is hoping to develop a career in Investment Banking, and is currently studying part time doing a post-graduate diploma in Applied Finance and Investment.

Sean Douglas is no slouch on the park, and obviously not one off the park either.

Fred Leggett

COUNTDOWN 2000

Beginning a regular series on the 2000 Olympics with the big event now only 97 weeks away

with Stuart Bell

151 DIFFERENT countries started the road to Sydney which will culminate with Australia's fourth involvement in the finals of an Olympic tournament - and the second as host nation.

The breakdown per confederation is:	competition:
34 AFC	3 AFC
33 CAF	4 CAF/OFC*
26 CONCACAF	2 CONCACAF
10 CONMEBOL	2 CONMEBOL
7 Oceania	4 UEFA
41 UEFA	1 Host (Australia)

Australia (host country), which is included in the total of 151, automatically qualifies for the final competition.

The good news, especially in light of recent event, is that status allows Australia to avoid playing old enemy, New Zealand - at least until possibly the later stages of the tournament.

At its meeting in Paris on 3 December 1997, the FIFA Executive Committee decided upon the following allocations for the final

AUSTRALIA (which will be drawn team A1) will play in Group A, with matches scheduled in Melbourne, Adelaide and Sydney. However, the only group match that Australia will play away from the Sydney Football Stadium is the Games opener, which will be played at the MCG on September 13.

GROUP A		
Sep 13 Melbourne (MCG)	A1 v A2	
Sep 13 Adelaide (Hindmarsh)	A3 v A4	
Sep 16 Sydney (SFS)	A1 v A3	
Sep 16 Adelaide (Hindmarsh)	A2 v A4	
Sep 19 Sydney (SFS)	A1 v A4	
Sep 19 Adelaide (Hindmarsh)	A2 v A3	

QUARTERFINALS		
Sep 23 Sydney (Homebush)*	wnr A v 2nd B	
Sep 23 Melbourne (MCG)†	wnr B v 2nd A	
Sep 23 Canberra (Bruce) ‡	wnr C v 2nd D	
Sep 23 Brisbane (Lang Park)*	wnr D v 2nd C	

SEMIFINALS		
Sep 26 Sydney (Homebush)	winners of *	
Sep 26 Melbourne (MCG)	winners ‡	

BRONZE MEDAL PLACE PLAY OFF		
Sep 29 Sydney (Homebush)		

FINAL		
Sep 30 Sydney (Homebush)		

Not everybody in the ranks of the Strikers thought that it would be a bad move if a Trans Tasman team were admitted to the league, although CHRIS ZORICICH, being a New Zealand international, could be just a little bit biased with his view. "No," he said, "because Australians wouldn't be able to cope with losing every week!" "Seriously, I think it would be a good idea.

"It would strengthen New Zealand, but it would also strengthen Oceania and provide more opportunities for more young players from both countries and that's a good thing."

JEREMY HARRIS, who headed home the Strikers opening goal of this season's Ericsson Cup agrees with Zoricic, but also raises the issue of the number of teams in the league:

"I don't see why they

shouldn't be allowed in, but I would be worried about whether New Zealand and existing Australian clubs could afford the extra cost.

"I'd also like to see less teams in the competition overall.

"But I think New Zealand's inclusion has brought extra interest and excitement to rugby league and rugby union and we should try it."

Brisbane based Bonnie Merslades, co-

author of Marconi coach Frank Farina's new book, "My World Is Round" would welcome a Kiwi club side: "I think it's a winner from any perspective. From a marketing point of view, it provides expanded opportunities for corporate sponsors and added interest for fans - as well as a good team to hate!"

"It would provide an improved level of competition in Oceania

which is good for football in the longer term.

"I don't buy the argument that we would be helping the New Zealand national team, as we do already by allowing New Zealand players into Australian clubs.

"Fundamentally, a strong New Zealand is a good thing for Australian football."

Football as the cliché goes, is a game of opinions, and just as Bonnie

is all in favour of a team from EnZed, so long time Brisbane fan

DAVID MARSHALL, is equally adamant that it would be a bad move.

"I am totally opposed to it," he rallies. "I see absolutely no reason to do anything to risk aiding our only rivals in the Oceania Confederation. What the game needs most of all is credibility with Jo (and Josephine) Public here in Oz and the only times I can re-

call it even approaching this were when we qualified in 1974 and almost did so on Nov 29th last year.

"The Kiwis have shafted us in the World Cup once, the World Youth Cup once and now the Confederations Cup without any help from us whatsoever - other than possibly team and coach selection.

"I don't see any place for altruism on the football field."



Bruce Campbell

IT'S ONLY AN OPINION

CHEER OF THE WEEK

THOSE MARVELOUS crowds at Perth really do deserve my cheer of the week.

The only problem about living in the Golden West is that you are so far away from everyone else.

But I suppose that when you have fantastic beaches, a great city and a super soccer side then most of it is in place.

Who cares about how close you are to Marrickville or St Kilda?

The Glory deserve a Top Six spot, and I for one will cheer like hell when that does happen.

They have been like a breath of fresh air to the NSL.

LAST SEASON I took a sabbatical from soccer journalism to spend a time as a media consultant with the Canberra Cosmos.

I'm not going to say that I am always right – but the last time the Cosmos won a match coincided with my last day at the club.

Sure, there were good times – and plenty of bad, but I'm grateful to then chairman Paul Murphy for giving me the opportunity to see a side of soccer that few in this country do.

One of the highlights was arranging the transfer of Gordon Hunter from Hibs – thanks to a tip-off from my pal in Sydney, Fred Legget.

Hunter was a stand-out in a season of mediocrity.

His arrival started the best run that the club had and also brought it

its first point of the season.

Sadly, they decided that 'Geebsie' was too expensive.

But how expensive is playing to an almost deserted Bruce Stadium.

It is undoubtedly the finest NSL stadium in Australia but it is more suited to a twenty thousand plus crowd than the paltry twelve hundred or so who are bravely following the Cosmos now, post Hunter.

They are the real supporters, the ones who will follow their club rain, hail or shine.

What a pity then that the club got rid of its

best player – and best clubman.

Listeners to my radio programme on Wollongong's VOX FM would have heard Cosmos coach Rale Rasic bemoan the absence of the never-say-die spirit of Hunter.

He also acknowledged his ability as a player.

So too have Dundee, in the Scottish Premier League – for they have called Hunter into their first team.

Not bad for an old duffer who is supposed to be too slow....

LIKE THE header says; it's only an opinion.

YOU CAN EMAIL me at insidesoccer@hotmail.com. Or fax me on (02) 4285 7481. You don't have to share my opinion about anything in the game – just go easy on the insults. After all, I'm just a poor ethnic boy. But you need to send your messages to reach me by Friday morning prior to print to reach the next deadline.



Benny; back to rugby league?

Unfortunately, there are those out there who don't like others coming public with their opinions.

My collegeaues Ray Gatt and John Warren get branded with the same slur – we are being negative.

Apparently every time you say something others don't like it is fashionable to say you

are being negative.

That was David Hill's way of slamming others down, unfortunately it has caught on.

Luckily, though, there are federal voters who are also negative – I wonder where 'Benny' will pop up next?

Hopefully, he'll go back to rugby league – or is that a negative thought!

KOSTA WOLVES

THE WOLVES must have been rocked by the \$35,000 transfer fee slapped on Kosta Salapasis by the NSL Tribunal.

That, plus a percentage of any overseas sell-on, would have been a blow to their pre-season financial forecasts.

But not half as much a blow as the news of the New South Wales club's ticket prices.

If you are a family man and want to take your wife and two kids to the best seats in the house it will cost you a whopping eighty bucks – and that doesn't include any goodies bought on the night.

The family man is even being sluggish on the hill were he gets a measly \$2 discount off full admittance for his family of four – and then pays full whack for any other additional kiddies.

Kosta mucho?

The Wolves have the highest ticket prices in the NSL and at a time when unemployment is getting higher on the coast the message is clear – families aren't their marketing target.

Mucho pity

Blades

Blades

Blades

Blades



The man behind the cup
claims

The game isn't as exciting today

IN RECENT seasons the prestigious Waratah and Dockerty Cups have both gone by the wayside, along with the controversial NSL Cup.

But one trophy which has survived and can claim its place

we were really amateurs.

"But nowadays Illawarra (Premier League) clubs are attracting very good players because they pay out top money.

"That didn't happen when I played."

Balgownie side which played in the Southern League, then rated one of the best around.

"There were a lot of good players about in Illawarra then," he says.

"Illawarra had three teams playing in the Sydney competition so

"When I played we had five forwards so it was more exciting for spectators, the game was all about attack"

as the only major senior knockout tournament to be named after a still-living former footballer is the Illawarra Soccer Association's Bampton Cup.

Bert Bampton is himself an interesting character and before the 1998 final I got a chance to catch up with the man behind the trophy.

Bampton might be well past his playing day prime but this former goalkeeper is still sharp and forthright, offering opinions on a whole gamut of soccer topics.

"Money is killing the game," he says.

"Nowadays you have to have the financial backing to be successful. When I was a player you played for your district club, there was no payment to play. We all just played for the fun of the game itself,

Bert Bampton started his own career as a centre-half in the junior ranks before switching to goalkeeper.

He was good enough to be snapped up by the Goodyear club in Sydney, then one of the big clubs in Australian sport.

With that came a job - a good enough reason to transfer in the 1930s when the Depression was having its effect. There weren't many jobs around in Wollongong then," he recalls, "but Goodyear had a good team.

"We had a goalkeeper called Norman Conquest so I played most of my football in reserves."

(Conquest was the recognised Australian keeper, playing in 12 internationals for his country)

After a spell in Sydney football Bampton moved back down to the 'Gong and became a feature in the

there was always a good standard.

"If you want to play at the top level then you have to play with the best team."

And Bert Bampton also has strong opinion about just how good goalkeepers of his era were.

"We (Australia) have always produced good goalkeepers," he says.

"Jimmy McNabb was a good goalkeeper (he was rated among the best in a recent press poll) but so was Conquest and then there was Ron Lord also.

"I'd rate these fellows just as good as any we have today."

That includes the likes of Bosnich, Kalac and Schwarzer although Bert does agree with Zeljko Kalac who lists playing cricket as one of the reasons for Australia's pre-eminence in producing first class custodians.

"The game itself has come on a lot," he

admits. "It has really improved. When I played as a boy in Wollongong there was only schools soccer, there was no junior competition. Junior soccer started in the 1940s with a Saturday morning competition but at school we played

either soccer or rugby union. Rugby league wasn't popular then and soccer really was the number one game.

"We had big crowds watching us as well although most of the football was played in northern Wollongong, there wasn't much

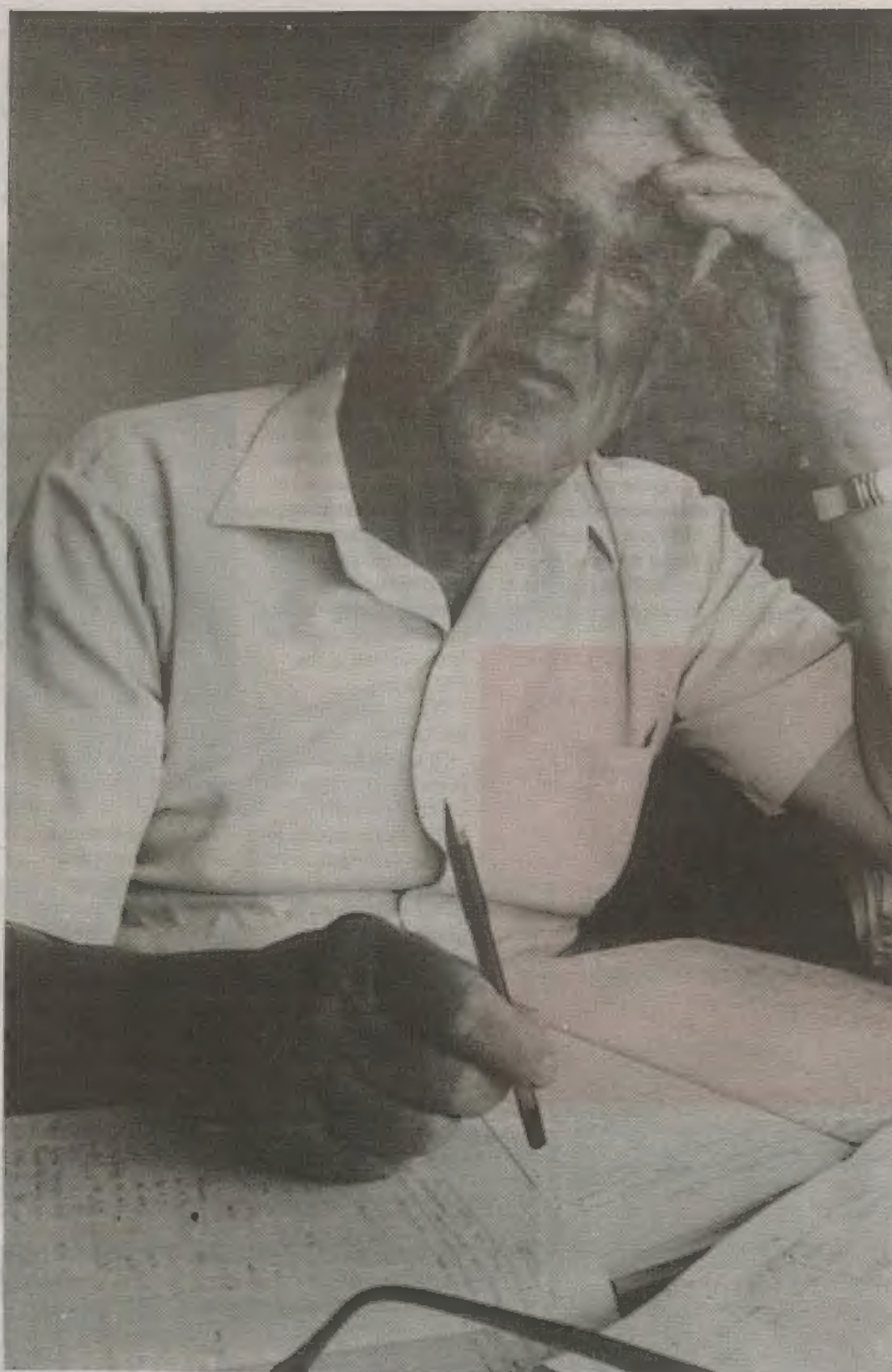
played in the south.

"These days the ethnic (backed) clubs have brought a lot of money into the game. The players get paid well but it isn't as good to watch. There is a lot of coaching in the game which makes it more defensive.

"When I played we had five forwards so it was more exciting for spectators, the game was all about attack.

"Now that has changed and it is more about defence. But the sport as a whole has improved a lot."

Bruce Campbell



THE BAMPトン CUP all the past winners

1973	BERKELY	1986	ARIS
1974	BELLAMBI	1987	WESTS/FIGTREE
1975	BULLI	1988	WESTS/FIGTREE
1976	BELLAMBI	1989	not played
1977	BULLI	1990	CRINGILA UNITED
1978	WOLLONGONG UNITED	1991	PORT KEMBLA
1979	TARRAWANNA	1992	FERNHILL
1980	TARRAWANNA	1993	CRINGILA LIONS
1981	SHELLHARBOUR WORKERS	1994	CRINGILA LIONS
1982	FERNHILL	1995	PORT KEMBLA
1983	TARRAWANNA	1996	LYSAGHTS
1984	WARILLA WANDERERS	1997	CONISTON LIONS
1985	FERNHILL	1998	PORT KEMBLA

The Back Page

STOP PRESS

Danny's Knee

By Scott Coghlan

Perth Glory goalkeeper Danny Milosevic hopes to be fit to make his senior debut for Australia against the United States on November 6.

Milosevic is battling knee soreness.

A regular member

of Australia's Olyroos under-23 team, Milosevic suffered a kick on his left knee during the Glory's two-all draw with Brisbane in Round 3.

It is the same knee he had reconstructed in 1995 and Milosevic feared the worst when the incident occurred in the opening minutes of

the game.

Examination revealed only bruising, and intensive physiotherapy combined with pool work is expected to have the in-form 'keeper fit for his Australian debut.

Milosevic resumed training late last week and said the call-up was an added bonus for some good early season form, with the Glory up at the top end of the NSL ladder.

"This is great news for me," he said.

"It is totally unexpected, but great news nonetheless.

"I'd always aspired to step up to the next level.

"I'm just grateful and honoured to be part of it."

Milosevic said he expected the depth in Australian goalkeeping, with the likes of Mark Bosnich and Mark Schwarzer heading the



queue, to limit his opportunities despite his good form with the Olyroos.

He has great admiration for Bosnich and hopes to eventually meet him, but is also eyeing his spot further down the track.

"Maybe I can take his spot one day," he said.

Socceroos coach Raul Blanco confirmed Milosevic was under

strong consideration for a starting spot in the match and said the 20-year-old deserved a chance at the top level.

"He's a very talented goalkeeper," he said.

"He has shown he's got all the necessary ingredients to play at the international level.

"He's been a good goalkeeper for the under-23s and at youth level."

TOO MANY YELLOWS

Outspoken former referee Clive Thomas has demanded a meeting with FIFA president Sepp Blatter to change the rules over yellow cards following a surge in the number of bookings in the English game.

Thomas believes that unless the world body acts quickly the problem will only get worse. He said: "I put a set of proposals to Sepp Blatter three weeks after the World Cup, recommending a complete change of emphasis as far as the refereeing situation was concerned. He wrote back saying I should take my complaints up with the Football Association and Premier League but that is no use. There has to be direction from the very top, so I have written again asking for a meeting."



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SDA nabbing the cheats

By Rosalind Mathieson

AUSTRALIA'S drugs in sport watchdog carried out more than 4,000 tests over the past year, nabbing 42 athletes for testing positive to performance enhancing substances.

The Australian Sports Drug Agency (ASDA) 1997-98 annual report, released at the end of last week, showed the number of tests increased by 23 per cent, with the majority conducted out of competition.

"This result, supported by sound test distribution that targets high risk sports, suggests ASDA continues to deter athletes from using banned doping practices," it said.

But it said it was concerned about the use of undetectable substances such as

erythropoietin (EPO) and human growth hormone - which are naturally occurring - in elite sport.

In all, ASDA carried out 4,313 tests which resulted in 42 entries on the Register of Notifiable Events and 12 positive tests returned by non-Australian athletes.

But ASDA said the percentage of positive results where appropriate sanctions were imposed was 87.5 per cent, below its target of 95 per cent.

"While ASDA does not set or control sanctions applied to doping offences, it recognises that inappropriate sanctions undermine the deterrent effect of the doping control program," it said.

It pointed out that four of the positive results on anabolic

agents incurred sanctions of less than two years, for athletes in Australian Rules football and rugby league.

The positive tests listed on the register included high profile rugby league players, including Newcastle's Robbie O'Davis, who was slapped with a 22 match suspension earlier this year for returning an elevated testosterone level.

Also included was Newcastle team-mate Wayne Richards, banned for 22 matches for a positive test for the steroid stanozolol.

He was joined by Melbourne international Rodney Howe who received the maximum 22-match suspension after being found guilty of using stanozolol and andriol.

Several other unnamed rugby

league players were included for offences throughout the 1997-98 year, with warnings and short suspensions for pseudoephedrine and cannabis offences.

One player received a 22-match suspension for a positive testosterone test undergone last April.

Other entries included several in cycling for pseudoephedrine and amphetamines, four cannabis offences in motorcycling, several anabolic offences in weightlifting and bobsleigh and a two year suspension for a soccer player caught using amphetamines.

ASDA said there had been criticism of agency services arising from the high profile cases.

"These services were examined in detail and assessed as accurate," it said.